

## Gobbledegook...Pedantry Prevails

A veteran wrote to the government asking about a pension. He received the following answer:

*The noncompensable evaluation heretofore assigned to you for your service-connected disability is confirmed and continued.* It means, simply, that the veteran is not going to get a pension.

Gobbledegook is language that is too wordy, too technical, and too indirect. People think it sounds intelligent, but it's really just pedantic (bookish and didactic). Translating it is a little like breaking a code.

Here are eight examples of this bloviated language based on well-known proverbs. After the practice we've done in class, perhaps you can "translate" it even more skillfully. Whatever you do, eschew this kind of diction!

1. It is an accepted fact that in most cases a male descendant will emulate at least to some degree, his immediate male parent.
2. In the event of a minor mishap or accident, especially of an article of apparel or of related material, both intelligence and prudence suggests that an infinitesimal amount of thread can prevent the necessity of a much larger outlay of both material and effort.
3. Warm-blooded vertebrates of the class Aves that share an epidermal covering commonly known as plumage have a propensity for assembling, or perhaps one should say for congregating, in isolated and homogeneous crowds.
4. If one desires to become thoroughly cognizant of the character, meritorious or meretricious, of a specific individual, one should study, analyze, and evaluate those other individuals--business associates or social acquaintances—with whom the aforesaid specific individual generally, or even usually prefers to spend his time.
5. One is not able to retain possession of a sweet-tasting baked product and simultaneously consume said product.
6. Canines uttering hard, abrupt sounds do not simultaneously pierce someone's epidermis with the hard, bonelike structures rooted in their jaws.
7. Any human being who is afflicted with great physical, mental, or emotional pain has an intense fondness and preference for association with others who are similarly afflicted.
8. Before one considers acting precipitately, as if springing from the ground, one should obtain visual knowledge of the environment and any circumstances affecting it.

Just for fun, here are some famous lines with an extra "tag line" added. Stop while you're ahead is the point!

1. Good night, sweet prince; have a nice day.
2. Give me liberty or give me death, or c. none of the above.
3. I come to bury Caesar, not to praise him; it's about time you showed up.
4. It is an ancient mariner/and he stoppeth one of three. The Mariners were strong on defense.
5. You must pay for your sins. If you have sent payment, please disregard this notice.
6. It was the best of times; it was the worst of times. Details at eleven.

And here are some not so perfect place names:

1. The Lincoln Momento
2. The Smithsonian Place
3. Empire State Structure
4. Times Rectangle
5. The Sculpture of Liberty
6. The Stony Mountains
7. The Grand Ditch
8. Old Punctual
9. The Wide Country of Sports
10. The Rolling Pebbles

Here are some inflated phrases that are way more common, but should be avoided and what you should say (write) instead:

As a matter of fact	say in fact
Along the lines of,	say like
Due to the fact that	say because
By means of	say by
This day and age,	say currently
In the final analysis	say finally

Be on the lookout for these if they creep into your language.