

## **Tweets on Eliminating Words When Translating into English**

© Anglocom inc.

**Follow our Twitter feed for regular FR–EN translation tips: @anglais**

Can any words be removed? If so, don't even hesitate—take them out!

In FR texts that use “dernier” to refer to recent dates (e.g., 7 mai dernier), there is no need for the qualifying “last” in EN.

When giving street locations in EN, it is enough to say “at Main and Maple.” No need for “at the corner of” as in FR (“au coin”).

When you say “groups of 10 to 100” (or any other number), there is no need to add the word “people” afterwards.

More times than not, the words “en effet” at the start of a FR sentence can be eliminated altogether in the EN translation.

Whenever tempted to use the word “some,” ask yourself whether it is really necessary. You can often simply drop it.

There is no need—ever—to write “off of.” Eliminate the second word, and you will see that everything still makes sense.

Expressions like “rappelons que” or “il est important de rappeler que” often require no translation at all in EN.

Whenever tempted to translate “cette situation” as “this situation,” check whether you can drop the word “situation.” Often you can.

Although “sensibilisation” means “awareness raising,” “campagne de sensibilisation” is just “awareness campaign.” Drop the word “raising.”

Many connecting words and expressions between sentences and paragraphs in FR can simply be dropped in EN. Be on the lookout!

Do you really need to translate “intervenants” in “intervenants de l'industrie/du milieu”? Why not just say “the industry/the community”?

If “différent” comes before the noun in FR (différents choix), you can sometimes drop it in EN. Or say “various” instead.

Delete all notes in FR texts that say “le masculin comprend le féminin...” Your EN translation must be gender neutral.

“Dès aujourd’hui” usually means just “today,” not “from today” or “starting today”: Téléphonez dès aujourd’hui = Call today.

Spotted in the NY Times: “He is a master of short-windedness.” A great thing for all translators and writers to be!

“Requis” and “nécessaire” often require no translation at all: l’expérience requise pour faire le travail = the experience to do the job.

In sentences that start This + Noun, you can often simply eliminate the noun: Cet ajout entraînera... = This will cause...

The meaning of the FR “d’ores et déjà” is often conveyed by tone of voice in EN. Don’t overtranslate with words like “already.”

Once you have finished a translation, go back over it and ruthlessly cross off any words that don’t need to be there.

“The most valuable of all talents is that of never using two words when one will do.” (*Thomas Jefferson*)

Sometimes the word “long” all by itself can replace “for a long time”: He has hoped for a long time that.../He has long hoped that...

Sometimes the present perfect tense is all you need to translate “déjà”: On a déjà eu une belle réponse/The feedback has been great.

Don’t write “moreover” every time you see “par ailleurs.” A simple word like “also” could be the best translation—or nothing at all!

If you have a choice between a short translation solution and a long one, it’s almost always best to pick the short one.

The use of “which” where “that” is also possible can make your sentence sound clunkier. Try switching to “that” (or eliminate altogether!).

Remember the short and convenient EN words “inquire” and “inquiry” for “demander de l’information/demande d’information.”

The FR word “notamment” often disappears in translation. EN writers don’t feel the need to say the action/thing in question is one of many.

Studies by David Jemielity show that EN translators overuse the word “notably” in financial texts.  
Tip: Drop it altogether.

You can drop articles in front of “quality of life” in EN: enjoy (a) good quality of life. In FR: une bonne qualité de vie.

Before translating “quelques” or “plusieurs” as “a few/several,” consider whether you can drop the word altogether.

French loves expressions like “institut muséal” and “centre hospitalier,” but in EN “museum” or “hospital” is usually all you need.

A long FR organization name repeats in your EN text? Shorten where you can by just saying Corporation/Museum/Ministry/Commission/Board etc.

Consider shorter ways of saying “when it comes to.” Often “about/regarding/concerning” work just as well.

En quelques minutes: Why say “in a few minutes” if “in minutes” is enough? Here’s another: à quelques pas du coin/steps from the corner.

Another way to shorten your EN translations: Cliquer sur l’une ou l’autre de ces options/Click on an option.

Does your FR sentence start “Il est à noter/souligner que...”? It’s often best just to drop the words and say nothing in EN.

“Une majorité de...”: Why translate “a majority of” when most of the time you can just say “most”? Short and sweet!

Before writing “be able to,” consider saying “can.” It’s a short, convenient alternative that covers both the present and the future.

“Enfin” is sometimes just a marker in FR to let you know you’ve reached the last item on a list. Consider dropping it altogether in EN.