Be your own editor: Get to the point

Part A  Tighten rambling sentences

Poor:  Be careful not to write sentences that are loosely constructed in a long-winded fashion and that have a tendency to ramble instead of getting right to the point.

Better:  Get to the point. Don’t be longwinded.

Directions:
Edit the following sentences by cutting down wordy phrases and cutting out unnecessary repetitions. Be sure to retain essential information.

Example:  The three Byrnehurst students who were arrested for allegedly setting a fire in the boys’ locker room on Oct. 21 will be brought to trial on Nov. 24. Two of the students are held in the juvenile detention center and the other student is on home suspension.

Better:  Three Byrnehurst students go on trial Nov. 24 for allegedly setting a fire in the boys’ locker Oct. 21. Two are held in the juvenile detention center and the third is on home suspension.

Word count:  Before 47  After 34

1.  Shortly after 11 PM, Byrnehurst Principal Kevin Claypoole was notified by police if the break-in and attempted arson which was then in progress.

_________________________________________________________________

Word count:  Before _____  After _____

2.  The break-in was first noticed when a group of Byrnehurst students passed by in a car and called 911 to report that they had noticed shadowy figures running from the building.

_________________________________________________________________

Word count:  Before _____  After _____

3.  The students who sing in the Byrnehurst mixed ensemble, the HiNotes, which is comprised of 16 members, placed first against 12 other schools that were entered in the district vocal music competition at Sutter State University on March 31. This was the HiNotes’ first time ever to take part in this competition.

_________________________________________________________________

Word count:  Before _____  After _____

4.  Because the ensemble’s performance won the top spot in the district vocal music contest, the group landed a spot in the state contest in which district winners from all over the state compete.

_________________________________________________________________

Word count:  Before _____  After _____

5.  In preparation for this year’s prom, Byrnehurst Sparkles, committees which are made up of both students and parents have been working for months to make this night a night that will be both safe and fun. Among other things they have been planning various types of games and contests, which will go on all night long.

_________________________________________________________________

Word count:  Before _____  After _____
Part B Get a strong start

Opening words in a sentence or paragraph make the first impression – choose them carefully. Expletives are not just “dirty” words. They’re *there* and *it*, too. Used as introductory words, *there* and *it* delay the real “meat” and subject of the sentence, and they frequently lead to wordiness and dullness.

**Poor:**  
There will be a meeting of students wishing to …

**Better:**  
Students wishing to explore the Internet can find …

**Poor:**  
It will no longer be a policy to allow students coming late …

**Better:**  
Students coming late to class will no longer …

Edit and rewrite the following sentences.

1. There has been an increase in enrollment at Byrnehurst each year for the past five years, and there have been nine new faculty and staff members added this year as a result.

   ____________________________________________________________

   **Word count:**  Before ______  After ______

2. It is only a few weeks until the official dedication of Byrnehurst’s new gym when there will be a special ceremony and an opportunity for students and community members to inspect and admire its up-to-date facilities.

   ____________________________________________________________

   **Word count:**  Before ______  After ______

3. It is the first amendment that supports the belief that school papers should exist as an entity that does not fear censorship.

   ____________________________________________________________

   **Word count:**  Before ______  After ______

4. There will be a cast of 36 in this year’s school musical.

   ____________________________________________________________

   **Word count:**  Before ______  After ______

5. According to Ms. Jamie Fairchild, faculty director, it would be difficult to coach individual actors with such a big group so it has been decided that Mrs. Ellen Stuart will be faculty co-advisor.

   ____________________________________________________________

   **Word count:**  Before ______  After ______