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Exercise : Eliminating Wordiness Exercise 3

Revise the following passage, avoiding wordiness and undesirable repetition.

A large number of people enjoy reading murder mysteries regularly. As a rule, these people are not themselves murderers, nor would these people really ever enjoy seeing someone commit an actual murder, nor would most of them actually enjoy trying to solve an actual murder. They probably enjoy reading murder mysteries because of this reason: they have found a way to escape from the monotonous, boring routine of dull everyday existence.

To such people the murder mystery is realistic fantasy. It is realistic because the people in the murder mystery are as a general rule believable as people. They are not just made up pasteboard figures. It is also realistic because the character who is the hero, the character who solves the murder mystery, solves it not usually by trial and error and haphazard methods but by exercising a high degree of logic and reason. It is absolutely and totally essential that people who enjoy murder mysteries have an admiration for the human faculty of logic.

But murder mysteries are also fantasies. The people who read such books of fiction play a game. It is a game in which they suspend certain human emotions. One of these human emotions that they suspend is pity. If the reader stops to feel pity and sympathy for each and every victim that is killed or if the reader stops to feel terrible horror that such a thing could happen in our world of today, that person will never enjoy reading murder mysteries. The devoted reader of murder mysteries keeps uppermost in mind at all times the goal of arriving through logic and observation at the final solution to the mystery offered in the book. It is a game with life and death. Whodunits hopefully help the reader to hide from the hideous horrors of actual life and death in the real world.

United States, and Abraham Lincoln is credited with learning logic by studying Euclid's *Elements*. More creative was James Abram Garfield (1831–1881), the country's twentieth president, who in his student days developed a keen interest and fair ability in elementary mathematics. It was in 1876, while he was a member of the House of Representatives and five years before he became President of the United States, that he independently discovered a very pretty proof of the Pythagorean theorem. He hit upon the proof in a mathematics discussion with some other members of Congress, and the proof was subsequently printed in the *New England Journal of Education*. The proof depends upon calculating the area of the trapezoid of Figure 43 in two different ways—first by the formula for the area of a trapezoid, and then as the sum of the three right triangles into which the trapezoid can be dissected. Carry out this proof in detail.

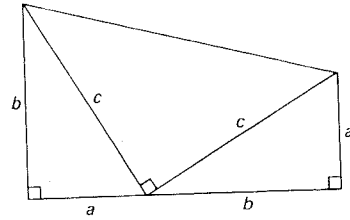


FIGURE 43

Answer: Eliminating Wordiness Exercise 3

Many people who have not committed, seen, or solved a murder, or felt any desire to do any of the above, enjoy reading murder mysteries. Reading these books allows people to escape the monotony of everyday life.

Now it's your turn to be the expert! Using these models, how would you continue condensing the essay in Part Three?
