



News - June 5, 2024 - 2 min

Reformulate Your Writing With Style



ANTIDOTE WEB



Six months ago Antidote introduced sentence reformulation using generative artificial intelligence (AI). Now the feature has been enhanced to help you effortlessly restyle your writing in specific ways.

We spoke to computer specialist **Nicolas Trudel-Mallet** and linguist **Mala Bergevin**—two people who helped develop the technology behind these improvements—about Antidote's new power to make style recommendations and its advantages.

What style options do these innovations in Reformulation offer?

Mala Bergevin (MB): We identified three stylistic features likely to make your writing feel flat that can be handily resolved through sentence reformulation.

1. Long sentences

You risk losing your reader along the way with a wordy style, so it's preferable to break your ideas down into shorter sentences:

Tea was completely unknown in England before 1650, but all that had changed by at the turn of the eighteenth century, when 200,000 pounds of Camellia sinensis leaves were already being consumed annually, and ten times that amount some fifty years later, with the famous English "afternoon tea" ritual accompanied by a light meal developing nationwide popularity in the 1860s.

⇒ *Tea was completely unknown in England before 1650, but all that had changed by the turn of the eighteenth century. By then, 200,000 pounds of Camellia sinensis leaves were already being consumed annually, and ten times that amount some fifty years later. The famous English "afternoon tea" ritual developed nationwide popularity in the 1860s, accompanied by a light meal.*

2. Impersonal constructions

Your writing can feel detached if you use an impersonal style, as the agent often isn't explicit:

There was a knock at the door.
⇒ *Someone knocked at the door.*

When the agent is mentioned in a sentence, impersonal constructions make its role in the action unclear; it's better to use a more straightforward style:

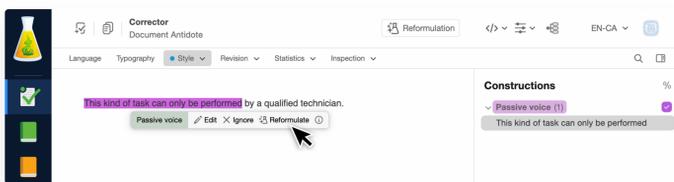
The government announced that there will be significant new investment in healthcare.
⇒ *The government announced that it will make significant new investment in healthcare.*

3. Passive voice

You may inadvertently make your text feel dull, formal and stuffy using passive sentences; they put the object at the centre of the action instead of the subject. Reformulate them in the active voice to animate your writing:

This kind of task can only be performed by a qualified technician.
⇒ *Only a qualified technician can perform this kind of task.*

Antidote has long been able to detect these kinds of language structures in the **Style** view. Now users can simply click the **Reformulate** button in the tooltip that appears for the corresponding detection to rework them.

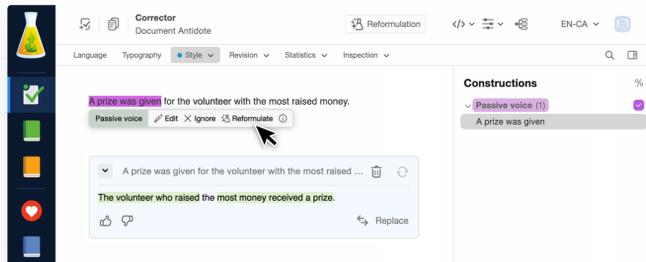


Why use Reformulation in a targeted way?

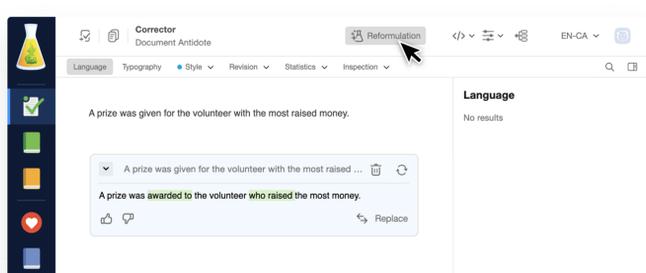
Nicolas Trudel-Mallet (NTM): So nothing is left to chance and you're always in full control of your work. These sentence reformulations are generated specifically to resolve the detection in question while introducing only minimal changes to the original text.

In most cases, clicking the **Reformulate** button in the tooltip for each detection type will generate suggestions that are phrased differently from those generated by clicking the general **Reformulation** button.

Targeted Reformulation



General Reformulation



How did you train the artificial intelligence system to develop these new options?

NTM: We gave our language model very specific training. You could even say that our linguists spoon-fed it a corpus of carefully selected data.

MB: Oh, definitely! We painstakingly built a corpus of sentences with errors and without. Since style rules aren't applied systematically, we reworded the sentences in the corpus ourselves using different approaches. Doing so allowed us to enable the AI to come up with a wide variety of suggestions.

NTM: The result is the symbiosis of artificial and natural intelligence. Our linguists' intelligence is used to feed the language model, which in turn produces reformulated sentences that are evaluated and revised, if necessary, by the same linguists who again feed the machine, and so on.

Another key advantage is Antidote's own code, the product of many years of development.

What sets Antidote's new options for Reformulation apart from similar AI offerings?

MB: The quality of our training corpus and the way we approach generative AI. We apply it to Antidote for a very specific purpose: the resolving sentences (which have undergone continuous improvement over the last 20 years). Antidote's reformulation suggestions help you vitalize your writing without distorting it.

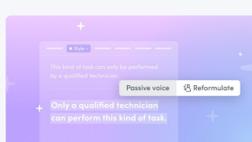
Become a Beta Tester With Antidote Web

Antidote Web includes both generalized and targeted stylistic Reformulation at no extra cost as part of a beta-testing program so we can get your feedback. The application is available as part of the [Antidote+](#) package or as a [subscription for organizations](#).



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