

Editorial Graphics and Publishing Services

Avoid Redundonyms in Writing

First things first: A redundonym describes an acronym or initialism that is followed by a word that is already part of the acronym. In conversation, we often use redundonyms—like ATM machine and IRA account, but try to avoid using these in formal writing. Here are a few more examples:

LCD display (LCD = liquid-crystal display)

NIC card (NIC = network interface card)

ISBN number (ISBN = International Standard Book Number)

SSN number (SSN = Social Security Number)

MLB baseball (MLB = Major League Baseball)

DSW shoe warehouse (DSW = Designer Shoe Warehouse)

PDF format or PDF document (PDF = portable document format)

NAFTA agreement (NAFTA = North Atlantic Free Trade Agreement)

VIN number (VIN = vehicle identification number)

GRE exam (GRE = Graduate Record Exam)

LAN network (LAN = local area network)

Exception: SAT test. SAT is no longer considered an acronym. In 1997, the College Board announced that SAT no longer stands for anything. So SAT test is a viable phrase.

Do you have a redundonym that comes to mind? Send us your examples and we will share them with our readers next month!