

Writing for Scientific Publication

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Outline

- Why write?
- Fallacies about writing
- Developing ideas
- The writing process
- Format, structure
- Peer review and publishing
- Resources

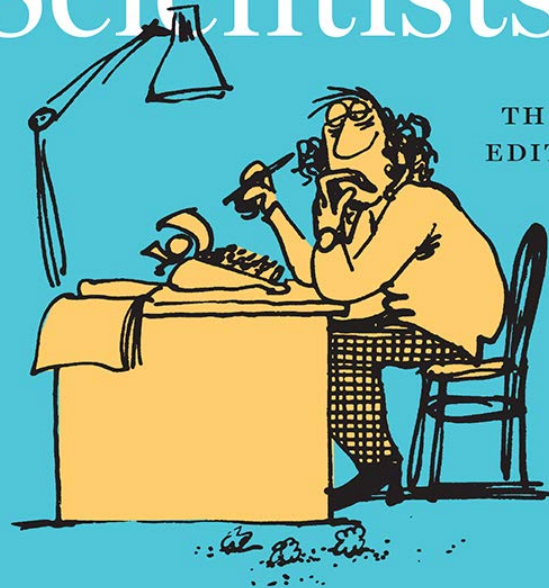
What is the point of writing?

- be clear about what you hope to accomplish by writing
- what are your personal/professional goals?
- what is the point of the research?
- what is the point of this specific article?
- how can that best be accomplished?

Fallacies

- Writing for publication is the same as writing a school assignment
- It is essential to know exactly what you want to say and be clear about your argument before you start writing
- Good writers get it right the first time, and do not need much editing

Writing for Social Scientists



THIRD
EDITION

*How to Start & Finish Your
Thesis, Book, or Article*

Howard S. Becker

Over 100,000 copies of the
first edition sold!

Second Edition

How to Write a Lot

*A Practical
Guide to Productive
Academic Writing*

Paul J. Silvia, PhD

"A practical handbook for anyone who needs to write."
—*The Boston Globe*

WRITING WITH POWER

Techniques for
Mastering the Writing Process

PETER ELBOW

NEW
EDITION

Twenty-fifth
Anniversary Edition

WRITING WITHOUT TEACHERS

PETER ELBOW

NEW
EDITION

The most important thing to understand is the need for two different mentalities or frames of mind for writing: a fertile, inventive, yea-saying mentality that will help us come up with lots of words and ideas; and a critical, skeptical, nay-saying mentality that will help us critique, cut, and revise what we have. These two mentalities get in each other's way because they push against each other, but if we make separate arenas for them, they can each flourish on their own and even reinforce each other.

Elbow, P. (2000). *Everyone can write: Essays toward a hopeful theory of writing and teaching writing*. Oxford University Press. (p. xiv)

Developing Ideas

- read actively, critically and in-depth
- read broadly, outside your field
- read literary works for style
- discuss what you read with colleagues
- conduct your own research
- maintain notes, ideas, essays, out-takes from other projects
- present your work

What are Editors Looking For?

- work that addresses an important question
- up-to-date and original work
- high quality work
 - appropriate methodology
 - rigorous, in-depth, innovative
- well-written and presented

Write for a Specific Audience

- Write with a specific group of readers in mind
- Write for a specific journal
- Write for a journal you want to read
- Write to join a conversation in which you want to take part
- Write to reach a specific audience, to have a specific impact on a particular question or issue that is current
- Write to lay the foundation for future work

Write for a Specific Journal

- Read the journals where you plan to publish to understand the state of the field, the current issues, and your place in the conversation
- Rank order several journals to identify where you may send it (based on type of material they publish and impact factor)
- Publish in the best journal you can but do not let it stifle your creativity (more specialized journals may give you more scope)

Choosing a Journal

- aims & scope
- author guidelines (types of articles; length, etc.)
- time to publish
- journal impact factor
- peer-review process
- indexing

Open Access

Defining Open Access



Open access (OA) refers to freely available, digital, online information. Open access scholarly literature is free of charge and often carries less restrictive copyright and licensing barriers than traditionally published works, for both the users and the authors.

While OA is a newer form of scholarly publishing, many OA journals comply with well-established peer-review processes and maintain high publishing standards. For more information, see Peter Suber's overview of Open Access: <http://legacy.earlham.edu/~peters/fos/overview.htm>.

Green vs. Gold



Green OA publishing refers to the self-archiving of published or pre-publication works for free public use. Authors provide access to preprints or post-prints (with publisher permission) in an institutional or disciplinary archive such as eCommons@Cornell and arXiv.org.



Gold OA publishing refers to works published in an open access journal and accessed via the journal or publisher's website. Examples of Gold OA include [PLOS \(Public Library of Science\)](http://PLOS.org) and [BioMed Central](http://BioMedCentral.com). **Hybrid journals** offer authors the option of making their articles open access, for a fee. Hybrid journals are still fundamentally subscription journals with an open access option for individual articles. They are not true open access journals, despite publishers' use of the term "gold open access" to describe this arrangement, and the [Cornell Open-Access Publication Fund](http://CornellOpenAccessPublicationFund.org) does not support open access fees to hybrid journals.

Predatory Publishers

- Unsolicited request for paper based on your published work, often in a field outside your expertise
- Unknown journal, editorial board, etc.
- Poor online presence
- Check list of predatory publishers: <https://beallslist.net>
- No standard identifiers, like ISSNs or DOIs
- No transparency about article processing charges or APS up front
- Not well-indexed

Separate the Outlining, Writing and Editing Process

- Begin with an outline for the paper and for each section
- You can add detail to this to flesh it out. However, in the process of writing you may clarify your thinking and discover new ideas
- Hence, it is important to have periods in the writing process to write freely, without concern about your own 'inner editor' or even with how it fits into the paper as a whole
- Bringing a paper to its final form requires many revisions

Guiding Questions

- Who will be the main readers of this paper?
- Who else would you like to reach?
- What is the main point of the story?
- What will interest readers in the paper?
- What background, context, and details do readers need to follow the paper?
- What do you want readers to learn or do as a result of reading the paper?

Adapted from: Dixon, N. (2001). Writing for publication—a guide for new authors. *International Journal for Quality in Health Care*, 13(5), 417-421.

How to Write and Publish a Scientific Paper

Eighth Edition

Barbara Gastel
and Robert A. Day

Copyrighted Material

JOSHUA SCHIMEL

WRITING SCIENCE

How to write papers that get cited
and proposals that get funded

...from C to N limitation through the alder-poplar
...open to a tight cycle. The mechanism of this is
...increase the rate of gross N-mineralization,
...to the other site increases the gross rate of
...immobilization more than mineralization, while
...et al. (Christ and Schimel 1997). This work also
...in the poplar site were due to short-lived
...a soil composition. Other work at Bonanza Creek
...alder in situ (Kuenen et al. submitted).

...chemicals in soil processes, we extracted low-molecular
...and poplar. The chemicals were extracted and
...absorbed onto silica gel to allow even distribution into
...depth in the main text of the proposal (Schimel et
...al. 1992, Schimel et al.
...mechanisms. Lab
... (Cates et

Structure of a Scientific Article

- Title, Authors, Contact information
- Abstract (structured or not)
- Keywords (in addition to obvious descriptors in title)
- Body Text
- References
- Tables & Figures

Structure of the Text

- Introduction (topic, rationale, objectives)
- Background, literature review
- Hypotheses (or research questions)
- Methods (setting & sample, instruments and measures, procedure, ethical considerations)
- Data Analysis
- Results
- Discussion
- Conclusion

Plan of Writing

- Results (Tables, Case Examples, Themes, Narrative extracts)
- Discussion
- Methods (setting & sample, instruments and measures, procedure, ethical considerations)
- Data Analysis
- Background, literature review [usually done before as part of developing project or grant submission]
- Introduction (topic, rationale, objectives)
- Conclusion
- Abstract, Keywords, Acknowledgements

Editing & Revision

- Put it away for a few days or weeks and then read it again as though it is someone else's work.
- Revise carefully.
- Ask 2 or 3 colleagues to read it (at least one who is expert in the area and one who is a general reader). Ask them to identify areas that are unclear or difficult to follow.
- Revise it again.
- If needed, hire a technical editor to edit the grammar & style.
- Review and revise again.

Journal Submission

- Follow journal style carefully (APA format, etc.)
- Use bibliographic, style editing software (e.g. Endnote)
- Submit in requested format (usually electronically)
- Use simple cover letter to attest to authorship and originality; mention if paper has some unique characteristic (e.g. 'the first study of X in Y') or if linked to recent articles or debate in journal mention this to the editor

After submission...

- Wait 3 weeks for an acknowledgment of receipt
- Contact journal by e-mail if no acknowledgement received.
- Wait 2-3 months for editorial response (interval depends on the journal) contact if none received.
- Respond to request for revisions promptly and send revised paper in.
- The whole cycle (to publication) can take many months to years.

Conditional Acceptance

- Accepted with corrections: essentially your paper is accepted if you can comply with the requested changes
- Do requested corrections or changes promptly
- Write a letter to the editor clearly explaining how you responded to each of the reviewers' comments or suggestions (number and quote the reviewers and your own revised text)
- If you choose not to make some changes recommended by the reviewers state why clearly and with references if necessary

Revise and Resubmit

- No guarantee that your paper will be published but the journal editor is trying to encourage you (you have a “foot in the door”)
- Decide if you can address the major concerns or if you should consider re-submitting to a different journal
- Undertake thorough revision (may need to do new reading and new data analysis)
- Include cover letter as with conditional exception but even more detail—this is your chance to show the reviewers and the editors that you have listened carefully and taken their critique seriously
- Do not do just a “cosmetic job”

Rejection

- Everyone experiences this—even excellent scientists and writers. Do not despair, do not give up
- Review the reasons for rejection and divide them into those you agree with and those you do not accept
- If there are few valid criticisms, reformat the paper and send it out right away to the next journal on your list
- If there are valid criticisms that you can address, revise the paper accordingly before sending it out again
- If there are fundamental flaws in design or presentation then go back to the drawing board: read more literature, re-design the study, collect new data, re-analyze the data, or find a new angle on your existing data that makes it interesting
- Do not despair, do not give up: there is a home for every good piece of work.

Your Manuscript is Accepted

- Send any missing information requested by the journal
- Let journal know where you can be reached so that they can send you editorial queries
- Review galley proofs carefully and make any needed corrections
- Obtain reprints or pdf file and send copies to colleagues and supervisors (maintain mailing list)
- Respond to reprint requests and queries with your relevant publications
- Apply what you have learned from the publishing experience to providing constructive reviews for other potential authors

Resources

- Free writing and other approaches
 - Elbow, P. (1975). Writing Without Teachers. OUP
 - Elbow, P. (1995). Writing With Power. OUP.
- APA and other styles manuals and templates [<http://www.apastyle.org/learn/>]
- EndNote and other bibliographic software
- Writing groups/workshops

Resources on Scientific Writing

- Day, R. A. (2016). *How to Write and Publish a Scientific Paper* (8th ed.). Greenwood.
- Barker, A. & Manji, F. (2000). *Writing for Change: An Interactive Guide to Effective Writing, Writing for Science, and Writing for Advocacy*, Ottawa: IDRC.
- Becker, H. S. (2020). *Writing for Social Scientists. How to Start and Finish Your Thesis, Book, or Article* (3rd ed.). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Germano, W. (2021). *Getting it published*. University of Chicago Press.
- Heard, S.B. (2016). *The Scientist's Guide to Writing: How to Write More Easily Throughout Your Career*. Princeton University Press.
- Kaye, S. (1990) *Writing Under Pressure: The Quick Writing Process*. Oxford University Press.
- Schimel, J. (2011). *Writing Science: How to Write Papers That Get Cited and Proposals That Get Funded*. Oxford University Press.
- Silvia, P. J. (2015). *Write it up: Practical strategies for writing and publishing journal articles*. American Psychological Association.
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Presenting Qualitative Results

Belgrave, L. L., Zablotzky, D., & Guadagno, M. A. (2002). How do we talk to each other? Writing qualitative research for quantitative readers. *Qualitative Health Research*, 12(10), 1427-1439.

Blignault, I. & Jan Ritchie, J. (2009). Revealing the wood and the trees: reporting qualitative research. *Health Promotion Journal of Australia*, 20(2):140-5.

Gilgun, J. F. (2005). "Grab" and good science: Writing up the results of qualitative research. *Qualitative Health Research*, 15(2), 256-262.

Levitt, H. (2018). *Reporting Qualitative Research in Psychology: How to Meet APA Style Journal Article Reporting Standards*. American Psychological Association.

Levitt, H. M., Bamberg, M., Creswell, J. W., Frost, D. M., Josselson, R., & Suárez-Orozco, C. (2018). Journal article reporting standards for qualitative research in psychology: The APA publications and communications board task force report. *American Psychologist*, 73(1), 26-46.

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Presenting Quantitative Results

- Appelbaum, M., Cooper, H., Kline, R. B., Mayo-Wilson, E., Nezu, A. M., & Rao, S. M. (2018). Journal article reporting standards for quantitative research in psychology: The APA Publications and Communications Board task force report. *American Psychologist*, 73(1), 3.
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- Lang, T. A., & Secic, M. (2006). *How to Report Statistics in Medicine. Annotated Guidelines for Authors, Editors, and Reviewers*. American College of Physicians.
- Nicol, A. A. M., & Pexman, P. M. (2010). *Presenting Your Findings. A Practical Guide for Creating Tables*. American Psychological Association.

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