Academic writing

"The art of writing is the art of applying the seat of the pants to the seat of the chair."

(Mary Heaton Vorse) an American journalist, labor activist, and novelist.
Scientific writing started …

• in the 14th C!

• Royal Society (England) established good practices.

• Thomas Sprat: plain and accurate description.

• Robert Boyle: do not bore reader with dull, flat style!
Will a nicely written paper with the same data be more likely be accepted than one written less nicely?

- The short answer is “no”. Clear and succinct writing helps, because editors and referees are very busy.
- I confidently say that a nicely written paper is far more likely to be considered for publication in the peer review process.
- Focusing on the abstract/summary paragraph is well worth it and it is not hard to get advice on a short piece of text (especially for not-native English speakers).
- Competition is fierce. That is a real incentive to present the work as clearly as possible. It does not have to be a work of literature, just clear and as concise as is consistent with clarity.
- Many people still think that good communication is a lesser skill than being able to use scientific equipment. My response is always this – any fool can learn to press buttons or read an instruction manual, but good writing takes time to master, and is the most important skill you can learn.
- The very best papers I have seen, in terms of accessibility, have been written by people whose first language was not English.
Some quotes about good writing:

“Good prose is like a window pane.”
George Orwell, Why I Write, 1946

“Prose is bad when people stop to look at it.”
T E Lawrence, Men in Hilt, 1943

“Effective scientific prose is accurate, clear, economical, fluent, and graceful.”

“Learning to become a better writer happens in the same way that learning to become a better thinker does,
- writing is thinking—made—tangible.
- writing is a process of finding and structuring ideas.
- writing is having something to say.
- writing is not just the search for the right words and the right order, but also for the right reasons.”
Lester Faigley, 1989

from Nature Education:
English Communication for Scientists (2014)

http://folk.uib.no/gmset/sciencewriting/
Academic Writing

Useful tools


Thoughts on how to Conduct a Systematic Literature Review. (Accessed 28.17)

News

Journals stop up plagiarism publishing. Cui et al. (2015) asked by CrossCheck software.

Writing Across the Curriculum

Professor Karin Lunde from UG Delta Seminar held a presentation at UGE about writing across the curriculum and mentioned the following resources:

The IAC Writing Across the Curriculum (IMC Writing across the curriculum) (accessed 01.08.2017)

Resources

The following resources were accessed from the internet on 10.20.17

Handbooks and web pages

- Academic Writing Handbook by Temple University of Islamabad
- How to Write and Publish a Scientific Paper by John Swales
- British Council - Teaching English Academic Writing - process and product
- Process-based Academic essay writing instruction in ESL English as a foreign Language context
- How to Write a Report: Style Nails. BCS Publishing Group
- University of Edinburgh - Grammar for Academic Writing
- University of London - Academic Writing
- European Science Editors (EASE), EASE Toolkit for Authors
- Website reviewed:

Some Journals on Academic Writing

Nature:
- Quiz: reading is a Lifelong Habit
- Scientific literacy - Open or shut
- Tutorials in your writing skills
- Writing takes work

Science:
- Improve your writing today
- Basic tips for beginners
- How to write scientific
- Three ways to improve your scientific writing today

Latest:

For authors
B&H
For authors
REJ:
Author Centre

Courses:
- Academic Writing Course
- University College London Academic Writing Course
- Future Learn: Learn how to write using academic English
- Structured Text - A Guide to Academic Writing

Questions? Suggestions? contact: elinor@elsevier.com

Check out these resources and references

http://folk.uib.no/gmset/sciencewriting/
The Purdue OWL: Academic Writing
https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/1/2/ • Oversett denne siden
The OWL resources will help you with the types of writing you may encounter while in college. The OWL resources range from rhetorical approaches for...

Academic Writing Style - Organizing Your Social Sciences Research ... 
libguides.usc.edu/writingguide/academicwriting • Oversett denne siden
Academic writing refers to a style of expression that researchers use to define the intellectual boundaries of their disciplines and their specific areas of expertise.

Academic writing: language and style - Academic writing - Leeds ... 
https://library.leeds.ac.uk/Skills@Library/Academic skills • Oversett denne siden
Advice and activities to help you to improve your academic writing from Skills@Library at the University of Leeds.

Academic writing - Wikipedia
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Academic_writing • Oversett denne siden
Academic writing is conducted in several sets of forms and genres, normally in an impersonal and dispassionate tone, targeted for a critical and informed ...
Writing for a discourse... • Intertextuality • Conversation • Academic document types

Definition of Academic Writing - English Grammar Rules & Usage
grammar.yourdictionary.com/definition-of-academic-writing • Oversett denne siden
A simple definition of academic writing is hard to come by because it refers to writing done for several reasons. Also, academic writing is used in many different ...

Academic writing style - Library and Learning Resources
library.bcu.ac.uk/learningwritingguides/1.20.htm • Oversett denne siden
1.20 Academic writing style. There's no great mystique about an "academic writing style". The
General Writing Tips

Here are a collection of useful tips on the general structure, formatting and writing of research articles.

- What to think about before you begin your research?
  BioMed Central has published a useful series of ‘How to get published’ blog posts.

- How to prepare a micro-article
  The micro-article is a template that scientists can use to identify their principal results.

- Key writing tips
  This module describes the development of a typical data-based research article from the planning stage to the completion of the final draft. It emphasizes scientific writing techniques, the structure of a scientific article and effective methods of scientific communication.

- How to write a good qualitative paper

http://www.ease.org.uk/publications/ease-toolkit-authors/
### MEDLINE®: Number of Citations to English Language Articles; Number of Citations Containing Abstracts

(as of mid - December 2016)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years of Publication</th>
<th>Total # Records</th>
<th># English (%)</th>
<th># Non English (%)</th>
<th># with Abstracts (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2015-2016 *</td>
<td>182,261,428</td>
<td>966,285 (94%)</td>
<td>56,289 (6%)</td>
<td>863,022 (84%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-2014</td>
<td>4,095,353</td>
<td>3,752,353 (93%)</td>
<td>338,901 (7%)</td>
<td>3,414,920 (85%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005-2009</td>
<td>3,296,658</td>
<td>2,981,744 (90%)</td>
<td>314,944 (10%)</td>
<td>2,726,640 (83%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000-2004</td>
<td>2,641,522</td>
<td>2,356,084 (89%)</td>
<td>285,438 (11%)</td>
<td>2,079,224 (79%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995-1999</td>
<td>1,772,209</td>
<td>1,908,930 (88%)</td>
<td>268,279 (12%)</td>
<td>1,638,980 (75%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990-1994</td>
<td>1,974,307</td>
<td>1,652,193 (84%)</td>
<td>322,114 (16%)</td>
<td>1,438,841 (73%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985-1989</td>
<td>1,743,614</td>
<td>1,349,420 (77%)</td>
<td>393,994 (23%)</td>
<td>1,067,729 (61%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980-1984</td>
<td>1,430,231</td>
<td>1,060,031 (74%)</td>
<td>370,200 (26%)</td>
<td>724,389 (50%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975-1979</td>
<td>1,288,905</td>
<td>894,364 (69%)</td>
<td>394,541 (31%)</td>
<td>533,461 (41%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970-1974</td>
<td>1,107,860</td>
<td>694,236 (63%)</td>
<td>413,654 (37%)</td>
<td>40,423 (4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965-1969</td>
<td>949,617</td>
<td>518,640 (55%)</td>
<td>430,977 (45%)</td>
<td>20,484 (2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960-1964**</td>
<td>645,227</td>
<td>314,602 (49%)</td>
<td>330,625 (51%)</td>
<td>8,333 (1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955-1959**</td>
<td>537,247</td>
<td>253,109 (47%)</td>
<td>284,138 (53%)</td>
<td>2,956 (1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950-1954**</td>
<td>505,214</td>
<td>230,278 (46%)</td>
<td>274,936 (54%)</td>
<td>1,506 (30%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pre-1950**</td>
<td>259,177</td>
<td>166,944 (64%)</td>
<td>92,233 (36%)</td>
<td>634 (24%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td>23,621,675</td>
<td>19,108,383 (81%)</td>
<td>4,513,292 (19%)</td>
<td>14,561,362 (62%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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1Includes author abstracts (in AB field), or abstracts written by someone other than the author or an indication that the author abstract is available in other languages (the latter two are in OAB, Other Abstract field).
Writing in English

- Don’t translate
- Read news in English
- Make lists of terms
The object of publishing a scientific paper is to provide a document that contains sufficient information to enable readers to:

- assess the observations you made
- repeat the experiment if they wish
- determine whether the conclusions drawn are justified by the data.
3 Rules

• Brevity
• Clarity
• Clean

KISS
Don’t aim for perfection!
Save something for the next paper!
Writing is a process

Often it is only when writers are engaged in the process of writing that they discover what they want to say!

Phases:
pre-writing, drafting, responding, revising, editing, post-writing
More guidelines!

- Active vs passive voice
- Only 2 tenses
- Important info first
Practical Tips

NB: this is a work in progress - not all the menu links function as yet

“There’s no such thing as good writing, only good rewriting.”
(unknown)

The way you write creates a direct impression of you and your work. Good writing creates a good impression! It does not “just happen”. The need for editing and revision cannot be overstated.

There are now many, many wonderful online resources for writing. A number are listed on this website. Please do not hesitate to send in specific questions, or suggestions of other internet sources that should be included (see Footer).

English is a living language: rules, norms, definitions are constantly changing. Here are some dictionaries with online versions: Oxford English Dictionary Online, Merriam Webster Dictionary Online and Dictionary / Thesaurus.com

Editing your own work:

“You are judged by how you spell”
(Griemins of Grammar, Boyle & Sullivan)

First: turn spell-check on (and grammar-check). The advent of automated editing services such as spell-check, grammar-check etc. has greatly improved the basic level of writing. But these services are not infallible; all writing can be improved at the very least with careful re-reading.

Second: pick your English - should it be American or British English? (or another English?) In Europe I believe that one should use British English. However, there are arguments for using American English, especially when writing articles for journals published in the US. Most journals accept either as long as the usage within an article is CONSISTENT. Check the style guidelines for each journal.

http://folk.uib.no/gmset/sciencewriting/
“Readers of scientific papers do not read them to assess them, they read them to learn from them . . . . What is needed is more simplicity, not more sophistication!” Aim “to inform, not to impress.”

Frances Luttikhuizen, European Science Editors (EASE), European Science Editing (ESE) (1998)