How to Write and Illustrate a Scientific Paper

Easy to read and up-to-date, *How to Write and Illustrate a Scientific Paper* will help both first-time writers and experienced contributors in authoring research papers. Although the examples are taken mainly from the medical and biological sciences, the principles described apply to virtually every branch of science. The book provides step-by-step information on how to prepare a scientific paper, from the title to how the reference list should be arranged. Illustrations, particularly graphs, are discussed in detail, with poor examples redrawn for comparison. The reader is offered advice on how to present the paper, where and how to submit the manuscript, and finally, how to correct the proofs. Examples of both good and bad writing, selected from actual journal articles, illuminate the author's advice in this accessible and informative guide.

*Dr. Bjöörn Gustavii* has been teaching courses in scientific writing for graduate students for twenty years. He graduated from the Medical Faculty of Lund University, Sweden, where he became an associate professor in obstetrics and gynecology. He brings his personal experience to this book, both from writing more than a hundred of his own research papers and from his work as a journal editor.
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Preface

Dear Novice Writer,

When I was in your shoes and preparing my first paper, I consulted a book on how to write. I found there a sentence encouraging the reader to stand in boiling water for an hour before doing the analysis:

After standing in boiling water for an hour, examine the contents of the flask.

I had a pretty good idea of what was wrong with the sentence but, at the time, I couldn’t figure out how to revise it, and the author didn’t tell me. Now I can. If, an hour later, you are still alive:

Place the flask in boiling water for an hour, then examine its contents.

So, in this book, every unfortunate example is followed by an improved version. Good examples are provided with appropriate bibliographic references. Bad ones, however, are presented with references expunged.

Some examples were taken from manuscripts in preparation, presented by participants in my courses on scientific writing. I have been holding such courses for doctoral candidates since 1980. Other specimens are from manuscripts submitted for publication. They were collected when I served as an editor of Acta Obstetricia et Gynecologica Scandinavica from 1986 to 1994. Yet others are from published material.

From course discussions I have learned what candidates want to know. Based on this information, some chapters are more comprehensive than others, such as the one on how to prepare graphs.
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Although the book describes the writing of a journal article, most of the principles also apply to the writing of other types of scientific reports, such as doctoral dissertations and case reports. Finally, don’t accept all my suggestions, because there is no ultimate truth regarding how to write a paper – as I mistakenly believed when I was a bit younger.

Good luck, my friend.

Björn Gustavii
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