HOW TO WRITE AND ILLUSTRATE A SCIENTIFIC PAPER

THIRD EDITION

This compact and easy-to-read book contains essential advice on how to take a manuscript from planning right through to publication. It will help both first-time writers and more experienced authors, to present their results more effectively. While retaining the easy-to-read and well-structured approach of previous editions, this essential guide has been expanded to include comprehensive advice on drawing graphs and information about *Open Access* publishing. Illustrations are discussed in detail, with poor examples taken from real papers from top-ranked journals redrawn for comparison. Such before-and-after examples are also provided to demonstrate good and bad writing styles. The reader is offered practical advice – from how to present a paper, where to submit the manuscript, through to responding to reviewers' comments and correcting the proofs – all developed through the author's extensive teaching experience and his many years spent working as a journal editor.

BJÖRN GUSTAVII has been teaching courses in scientific writing for doctoral (Ph.D.) students in medicine for more than 30 years. He brings his personal experience to this book, both from writing more than 100 of his own research papers and from his work as a journal editor.

How to Write and Illustrate a Scientific Paper

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Third Edition

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Preface to the third edition

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.

Therefore, in this book, every unfortunate example is followed by an improved version. Good examples are provided with appropriate bibliographic references. Poor ones, however, are presented with name of authors and titles of papers expunged.

I am delighted to find, since publication of the second edition, that my book is used in more disciplines than medicine and biology. This is understandable because the principle of scientific writing is the same in all disciplines. Many readers have also asked me to write more comprehensively about the graph. This third edition is therefore expanded with several new sections discussing this subject from almost all aspects with examples drawn from various fields outside medicine and biology, such as economics, law, history, political science and family studies.

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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