

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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Contents

Preface to the third edition	xi
Acknowledgments	xiii
1 Basic rules of writing	1
Brevity	1
Logic and clarity	2
Physically attractive	2
2 Comments on scientific language	3
English as a foreign language	3
Follow the “leitmotif”	5
Verbosity	5
He/she	6
Active or passive voice	7
Tense	9
Noun clusters and modifiers	9
Prevalence and incidence	10
Avoid the use of “respectively”	11
The “and/or” construction	11
Unnecessary hedging	12
How old is young?	12
Avoid synonyms to achieve elegant variation	14
The remote verb	14
3 Drafting the manuscript	15
Write down your thoughts as they arise	15
Where and when to write?	16
How it can work in practice	16
The other way around	17

4	Choosing a journal	18
	Impact factor	18
	Faculty of 1000	19
	Open access	19
5	How to begin	22
	Begin with the graphs	22
	Using a graph	22
	Computer graphic programs	23
	Programs used	23
	Graphs in this book	23
	Illustrators	24
6	Figure captions (legends)	25
	Two items in the caption	25
	Main message	26
	Abbreviations	26
	Typeface	26
7	Preparing a graph	28
	The line graph	28
	Curves and gridlines	28
	Ratio 1:1	29
	Text too small to read	30
	Labeling	30
	What the graph is meant to say	31
	The bar chart	45
	The area graph	58
	Band graph	59
	Grouped area graph	60
	The pie chart	61
	The box plot	66
	The three-dimensional graph	70
	False 3-D graphs	70
	True 3-D graphs	74
	Individual instead of summary data	79
8	Graph combination	84
	Bar chart and line graph combined	84
	The graph combined with a table	90
9	Drawings	94
10	How to design tables	96
	The descriptive title	96
	The declarative title	97
	Rounding off	97

	Table or graph?	98
	Typing the table	101
11	Title	102
	Whenever possible, use a declarative rather than a neutral title	102
	Titles ending with a question mark	103
	Begin with the keywords	104
	Use verbs instead of abstract nouns	104
	Avoid abbreviations in the title	105
	A title for your thesis	105
	Running title	106
12	Authors	107
	Guidelines on authorship	107
	The contributors list	108
	A question from a student about coauthorship	109
	Deceased author	110
13	Abstract	111
	The conventional abstract	111
	The structured abstract	112
14	Introduction	114
15	Methods	116
	The subjects	117
	Informed consent	117
	Omissions in reporting of randomized controlled trials	118
	Randomization	118
	Blinding	119
	Number of subjects	120
	Guidelines and checklists	120
16	Results	122
	Participant flow and follow-up	122
	Dropouts	123
	Loss of participants to follow-up	124
	Details of randomized participants	124
	Study outcome	126
17	Discussion	128
	A structure for the discussion	128
	Evaluate the results – not the authors	130
	Avoid claiming priority	131
	The reference-13 trick	132

18	Acknowledgments	133
	Thank people who have helped you	133
	Always give credit for financial support	134
19	References	135
	Vancouver versus Harvard style	135
	Accuracy of references and quotations	139
	Your own author name	140
	Chinese names	140
	Anonymous	141
	Record titles in the language of publication	143
	Citing electronic material	144
20	Ph.D. and other doctoral theses	145
	Compilations: the theses of the future	145
	Contributors	146
	Thesis at a glance	148
	General introduction	148
	Aims	149
	Methods and results	149
	General discussion	150
	Acknowledgments	151
	Cover illustration	152
	A closer look	153
	The structure of the thesis overview	153
21	Letters and case reports	155
	The thalidomide letter	155
	Format and size of a letter	156
	Transforming a paper into a letter	156
	Case reports	157
	Format and size of case reports	157
22	Numbers	159
	Numbers below 10	159
	Two numbers side by side	160
	Decimal point	160
	Thousands	161
	Numbers with several zeros	161
	Quotients of units	162
	Percentages	162
	Rounding to two significant digits	163
	Enumeration	163
	What do we mean by “often”?	164

23	Abbreviations	165
	Units of measure	166
	General principles	167
24	How to present statistical results	168
	Using <i>mean</i> when <i>median</i> is meant	168
	Using <i>standard error</i> instead of <i>standard deviation</i>	169
	Failure to distinguish between <i>statistical significance</i> and <i>biological importance</i>	169
	Selected presentation of multiple statistical testing	170
	Overinterpretation of subgroup effects	171
	Using <i>relative</i> instead of <i>absolute</i> figures	171
	Some further comments	172
25	Typing	174
	A model for typing the manuscript	174
	“Twain spacing”	182
	12-point Times	182
	Avoid using block capitals	183
	Up-and-down-style versus down style	183
	The length of the manuscript	184
	The importance of punctuation	184
26	Dealing with editors and referees	186
	Deal respectfully with referees’ comments	186
	Do referees delay?	187
	Unpublished work	187
	Shortening the manuscript	188
	Accepted or rejected	189
27	Correcting proofs	191
	What to correct	191
	Making corrections	192
28	Authors’ responsibilities	195
	Subjects’ right to privacy	195
	Duplicate submission	196
	Borrowing published material	196
	Saving your original data	199
	Literature needed on your desk	201
	On phraseology	201
	On synonyms	201
	On manuscript preparation	201
	On how to abbreviate a journal’s title	202

Further reading	203
Guides to writing	203
Punctuation	204
The English language	205
Style manuals	205
Illustrations	205
Statistics	206
Literature cited	207
Index	221

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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