

Cambridge University Press  
978-1-108-40139-5 — The Biomedical Writer  
Yellowlees Douglas, Maria B. Grant  
Frontmatter  
[More Information](#)

# The Biomedical Writer

---

Co-authored by a leading ophthalmology researcher and a professor with 15 years of experience teaching writing in the biomedical sciences, *The Biomedical Writer* addresses ways to use psychology and neuroscience to equip researchers and clinicians with an understanding of how effects like priming, primacy, recency, framing, and apparent paradoxes can make or break your articles and grant proposals.

*The Biomedical Writer* covers everything from making sentences readable, effective, and memorable to working with collaborators under unforgiving deadlines. Going far beyond the basic structure and content of manuscripts and proposals, this guide to writing in biomedicine also focuses on topics that include handling negative results and the most important and neglected step in submitting manuscripts to journals.

**Yellowlees Douglas, PhD**, is an Associate Professor of Management Communication at Warrington College of Business, University of Florida. She was also previously faculty at the university's Clinical and Translational Science Institute.

**Maria B. Grant, MD**, holds the Eivor and Alston Callahan, M.D., Endowed Chair in Ophthalmology at the University of Alabama. She has had a career in academic medicine for the last 30 years and has authored more than 200 peer-reviewed publications as well as 12 patents.

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press  
978-1-108-40139-5 – The Biomedical Writer  
Yellowlees Douglas , Maria B. Grant

Frontmatter

[More Information](#)

---

Cambridge University Press  
978-1-108-40139-5 — The Biomedical Writer  
Yellowlees Douglas, Maria B. Grant  
Frontmatter  
[More Information](#)

# The Biomedical Writer

---

What You Need to Succeed in  
Academic Medicine

**Yellowlees Douglas, PhD**

Associate Professor, University of Florida

**Maria B. Grant, MD**

Professor, University of Alabama-Birmingham



**CAMBRIDGE**  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press  
978-1-108-40139-5 – The Biomedical Writer  
Yellowlees Douglas, Maria B. Grant  
Frontmatter  
[More Information](#)

## CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom

One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA

477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia

314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre,  
New Delhi – 110025, India

79 Anson Road, #06-04/06, Singapore 079906

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

[www.cambridge.org](http://www.cambridge.org)

Information on this title: [www.cambridge.org/9781108401395](http://www.cambridge.org/9781108401395)

DOI: 10.1017/9781108233620

© Yellowlees Douglas and Maria B. Grant 2018

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2018

Printed in the United Kingdom by Clays, St Ives plc

*A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.*

*Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data*

Names: Douglas, Yellowlees, 1962– author. | Grant, Maria B., author.

Title: The biomedical writer : what you need to succeed in academic medicine / Yellowlees Douglas, Maria B. Grant.

Description: Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2018. | Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2017060363 | ISBN 9781108401395 (paperback)

Subjects: | MESH: Medical Writing | Faculty, Medical

Classification: LCC RT24 | NLM WZ 345 | DDC 808.06/661–dc23

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2017060363>

ISBN 978-1-108-40139-5 Paperback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

Cambridge University Press  
978-1-108-40139-5 — The Biomedical Writer  
Yellowlees Douglas , Maria B. Grant  
Frontmatter  
[More Information](#)

---

For Eric P. Berger and Ginger Clark,  
who permitted a carpet-bagger to labor away at  
this book at kitchen tables, a Coliseum, and all sorts  
of inconvenient places in their houses.

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press  
978-1-108-40139-5 – The Biomedical Writer  
Yellowlees Douglas , Maria B. Grant

Frontmatter

[More Information](#)

---

## Contents

*Acknowledgments* ix

- 
- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <p>1 <b>Writing: The Most Vital – and Neglected – Skill</b> 1</p> <p>Introduction 1</p> <p>Beyond IMRaD 2</p> <p>2 <b>Writing for Your Reader’s Brain</b> 4</p> <p>Making Your Writing Clear, Effective, and Efficient 4</p> <p>Recognizing Reading’s Three Challenges 5</p> <p>The First Two Stages in Reading: Lexical and Syntactic 7</p> <p>The Third Stage of Reading: Inference-Building 12</p> <p>Creating Coherence: Priming, Primacy, and Recency Effects 16</p> <p><b>Progressing Your Career: Writing Needs Just Enough Focus</b> 23</p> <p>3 <b>Before You Begin: Getting to So What? and Who Cares?</b> 25</p> <p>Before You Begin 25</p> <p>Classify Your Research According to Anticipated Outcomes 27</p> <p>Answering “So What?” and “Who Cares?” through Outcome Categories 32</p> <p><b>Progressing Your Career: Why You Need a Mentor</b> 34</p> | <p>4 <b>Getting Published: Manuscripts, Journals, and Submissions</b> 38</p> <p>Step 1: Write to Specifications 38</p> <p>Step 2: Expect to Make Revisions 40</p> <p>Step 3: Perform Due Diligence 40</p> <p>Step 4: Frame Your Study Design 42</p> <p>Step 5: Design an Introduction that Fits Your Article’s Type 44</p> <p>Step 6: Pre-empt Peer Reviewers’ Objections 60</p> <p>Step 7: Avoid the Curse of Information in Writing Results 67</p> <p>Step 8: Manage the Scylla and Charybdis of Discussions 71</p> <p>Step 9: Write the Abstract 81</p> <p><b>Progressing Your Career: Resilience and Resubmissions</b> 85</p> <p>5 <b>Getting Funded: Applying for Grants</b> 87</p> <p>Tackling Grant Applications 87</p> <p>Cast a Wide but Highly Targeted Net 88</p> <p>Before You Start Writing 88</p> <p>Follow the Proposal Guidelines Closely 94</p> |
|--|--|

Cambridge University Press  
 978-1-108-40139-5 — The Biomedical Writer  
 Yellowlees Douglas, Maria B. Grant  
 Frontmatter  
[More Information](#)

---

viii | Contents

---

Watch Where You Fall on that Anticipated Outcomes Continuum	94	
Choose Your Collaborators	96	
Understand the Structure and Content of Each Section	98	
Use Priming, Primacy, and Recency Effects	105	
Identify Implications	106	
Contact Grant Program Officers Early	114	7
Understand the Odds of Receiving Funding	115	
<b>Progressing Your Career: Responding to Comments on Grants and Manuscripts</b>	119	
<b>6 Collaborative Writing: Pass the Baton</b>	122	
Pass the Baton	122	
Step 1: Identify Team Members' Strengths	124	
Step 2: Assign Tasks that Match Team Members' Strengths	128	
Step 3: Use a Gantt Chart, Online Platform, or Software	132	
Step 4: Maintain Communication between Team Members	135	
<b>Progressing Your Career: Getting Your Name on Papers</b>	139	
<b>Communicating with the Public</b>	141	
Mastering Three Different Means of Reaching the Public	141	
Securing Informed Consent	141	
Communicating Guidelines and Recommendations	143	
Getting Your Research Outcomes to a Mass Audience	150	
<b>References</b>	175	
<b>Index</b>	198	

---



## Acknowledgments

*Yellowlees Douglas*: Virginia “Ginger” C. Clark, MD, offered too many comments to count during the early stages when I was writing this book. And she also helpfully directed my attention to the negative issue of the *American Journal of Gastroenterology* and to the importance of negative studies.

John H.J. Petrini, PhD, deserves canonization for suffering through far too much of Chapter 5, and I also owe the details on the use of cross-references and bookmarks entirely to him. In addition, our conversations provided the substance for the content that appears in *Progressing Your Career: Writing Needs Just Enough Focus*.

Special thanks to James McKellar at Cambridge for being all-around brilliant – and for ensuring that this book saw the light of day.

*Maria B. Grant*: I am very grateful to my mentor Dr. Thomas Merimee, who was a history professor before he went to medical school. He truly loved to write manuscripts and grants. The only advice he gave me was “just stay funded.” These three words served as a wonderful roadmap for my career.

I am indebted to Sergio Caballero who worked with me for more than 30 years. Sergio not only was outstanding at performing lab work, but he also edited and “beautified” hundreds of grants through the years.

I am thankful to my daughters, Lauren Ashely Grant and Bliss Anne Wargovich. They grew into beautiful, talented, and accomplished women, despite my endless hours of working while they were young. They provide me with unending inspiration.

Finally, I am grateful to my husband, Michael E. Boulton for his helpful criticism, support, and love.

This manuscript was written using Nisus Writer Pro, the best software for writing a grant or book, hands down. Thanks to the team at Nisus for giving permission for us to use their images of the Cross-Reference function, to Daniel Guajardo Kushner at Instagantt for permission to use Instagantt to produce a sample Gantt chart, and to Vint Cerf and Sergio Civetta for their kind permission to use images of a Google Scholar search.

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press  
978-1-108-40139-5 – The Biomedical Writer  
Yellowlees Douglas, Maria B. Grant

Frontmatter

[More Information](#)

---