

I can do that!

Tips on Writing for Publication

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Overview of writing cycle:



What is written without effort is in general read without pleasure
(Samuel Johnson 1709 – 1784)

Why Bother?

Consider the following statements. How important are they about why you should bother to write.

Statement		Tick one answer per statement			
		Very Impt	Impt	Quite Impt	Not Impt
1.	It is unethical to conduct a study or project and not report your findings				
2.	I have some results that are worth reporting				
3.	I want to progress scientific thought or improve health outcomes				
4.	I want to give credibility to myself or my team				
5.	I want my/our work to reach a broader audience				
6.	I want to improve my track record, CV or professional reputation				
7.	I want to improve my chances of promotion				
8.	I want to attract more funding to my team				
9.	I respect the time and energy that patients have put into my study/project				
10.	I want to make a difference				
11.	Other – please state what				

Reasons to write for publication:

What are the 3 reasons **YOU** want to write?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What types of publications are there?

Report on empirical research Innovation in practice or quality improvement Audit of practice Service evaluation Editorial An opinion piece A literature review A theoretical critique Poster presentation or verbal presentation	Book, chapter or book review Journal article An e-learning resource A letter to the editor of a newspaper or journal or a response to a journal paper Reflective writing Blog Twitter Podcast
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What are the qualities of good academic writing?

We have all read a publication that does not seem well written. Perhaps the language or style seems disjointed or there isn't a logical argument threading its way through the piece.

Think about these papers and spend 5 or 10 minutes thinking about why you believe it is poor or good quality e.g.

- a. Structure, language and content.
- b. Style and presentation
- c. Does the cited literature seem up to date and relevant?
- d. Are different sources or arguments acknowledged?
- e. Is the purpose of the paper clearly explained and does it deliver on its objectives?

Good academic writing, no matter the discipline, field, or genre, is characterized by:

(<https://www.academiccoachingandwriting.org/academic-writing/resources/good-academic-writing>)

Starting with Good Ideas. Writers should first be concerned with their ideas and translating these ideas into readable prose for their intended audience. Your ideas are the most important element of your project, especially as it takes shape. But before you show your final drafts to other readers, you need to pay attention to style, grammar, and mechanics, both traditional and in your field. Nothing will make a reader stop reading more quickly than poor style and grammar, even if the ideas are profound.

Having a Clear Sense of Audience, Genre, and Purpose. The most important aspect of becoming a good writer in your field or discipline is, as Ken Hyland (2000) has written, to be aware of your rhetorical choices. As you write, keep in mind the rhetorical purpose and academic standards under which you write: (a) Who is your audience? (b) What is your purpose? and (c) What is the genre of what you are writing?

Approaching the “So What” Question. Academic Writing is considered successful when it answers the “So What” question or problem statement, best described by the following guidelines to be answered in the text: (a) What is the issue? (b) What are the specific questions surrounding the issue? (c) What is the context and background of the issue? and (d) Why does the issue matter? If the work you produce answers these questions and tackles the answers by paying attention to both higher- and lower-order concerns, and adds new information (called the value-add) to make the writing even more compelling, the paper will be successful.

Using a Logical Progression of Ideas. Order your paragraphs and evidence in a linear manner that makes sense through transitions, signal phrases, and verbs that tell the reader if you agree or disagree with the evidence you are providing. Each paragraph, and your paper as a whole, should follow this format: (a) Introduce the main idea that will be discussed, (b) Provide the evidence used to prove your argument, and (c) Outline the significance of the evidence you have provided.

Using Sources Judiciously. As you write the connections and evidence portions of your work, take time to make the following choices: (a) How much information to provide, (b) What kind of information to provide, and (c) How to sequence the information you provide.

Writing Clearly and Directly. Write with a linear progression of ideas. Use strong verbs, rather than nominalizations or adverbs.

Writing Specific and Detail-Oriented Prose. Don't expect your reader to know what you know. You are the expert in this study. You need to hold your reader's hand so that he or she can follow your argument as it progresses.

Using a Consistent Tone and Style. Match the tone and style consistent with your discipline, field, or course.

Writing with a Compelling Strong Voice. You are either a member of the disciplinary tribe already, or you are asking to be accepted into the tribe. You are the expert on your subject. Write with conviction.

Making Sure Your Writing is Mechanically Competent: Finally, by using the proper rules of citation expected in your field or discipline, a writer is able to establish a credible writerly ethos. Citation helps to define a specific context of knowledge or problem to which the current work is a contribution. Citation plays an important role in mediating the relationship between a writer's argument and his or her discourse community. And then there is plagiarism. Do not do it.

Source: <https://www.academiccoachingandwriting.org/academic-writing/resources/good-academic-writing>
 Hyland, K. (2000). *Disciplinary discourses: social interactions in academic writing*. Essex, England: Pearson Education Limited

Barriers and Blocks to Writing:

Now think about yourself:

What are your barriers and blocks to writing?

Barriers are the reasons you don't write

Blocks are the reasons you can't write

Which are <u>your</u> reasons you <u>don't</u> or <u>can't</u> write		Tick one answer per reason		
		Very much so	A bit	Not at all
1.	I have lack of confidence in writing			
2.	I am afraid of my work being rejected			
3.	I am afraid of open criticism			
4.	I am insecure about my ability to write for academic journals			
5.	I don't know where to start			
6.	I don't know how to 'stop' or keep t to the correct word count			
7.	I don't know how to 'pitch it'			
8.	I don't know who my audience is			
9.	I have other priorities or commitments			
10.	I'm too busy to get started			
11.	I talk about writing but never actually get around to it			
12.	I have Post PhD or MSc or Degree fatigue			
13.	Having written an in-depth thesis or dissertation I am just too exhausted to embark on another writing commitment			
14.	Another reason – please state			

“Do it every day for a while – do it as you would scales on the piano – do it by pre arrangement with yourself – do it as a debt of honour and make a commitment to finishing things”

(Anne Lamott American novelist and non-fiction writer)

Think about your journey into work, what time do you go, how do you get there, what do you see?
Spend the next 2 minutes writing down your journey.....

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Writing- when, where, what and how:

1. **When** should you write?
 - a. As soon as possible
 - b. Today, tomorrow, next week, yesterday....
 - c. When it works for you

2. **Where** should you write?
 - a. At home
 - b. At work
 - c. On the train or bus
 - d. Find a "sacred space"
 - e. In a regular spot where you feel able to write

3. **What** do you need to write?
 - a. Pen, paper, pens
 - b. Laptop, computer, ipad
 - c. Internet access
 - d. Reference system
 - e. Switch off your phone and remove other distractions as far as possible
 - f. Set yourself achievable writing targets
 - g. Use a timer
 - h. Develop an action plan and commit to it
 - i. Go with the flow

4. **How** should you write?
 - a. View writing as a project and divide activities into specific tasks and develop instructions for yourself for each of those tasks
 - b. Plan your workload in manageable blocks
 - c. Adopt an incremental approach (write regularly and often) and try to avoid very long sessions
 - d. Remember to allow time for reviewing, editing, reducing and redrafting
 - e. Consider who can formally or informally review your writing?

Now think about yourself – what will help you the most in writing?



“I want to suggest that you write to your best abilities, it behoves you to construct your own tool box and then build up enough muscle so you can carry it with you. Then instead of looking at a hard job and getting discouraged, you perhaps seize the correct tool and get immediately to work”
Stephen King, American Novelist

A word about book chapters:

From time to time you may be invited to contribute to a book by writing a book chapter. The same principles as writing for journal articles apply. However, you may find that that the time line period maybe longer.

Before you start writing an article:

1. Have an overall aim for your publication
2. Topic, audience, key messages
 - a. Is what you want to say topical and relevant?
 - b. Why did you do it? (e.g. background/literature review/rationale)
 - c. What did you want to achieve? (e.g. aims/objectives)
 - d. How did you do it? (e.g. methods/methodology)
 - e. What did you find? (e.g. findings/results)
 - f. What does this mean? (e.g. discussion of impact, implications and conclusion)
 - g. Don't forget any strengths or limitations of your work as well as future directions.
 - h. What about patient and public involvement in your work?
 - i. Discuss it with others – throw all the ideas into the ring and then prioritize them – what adds value to your publication and what is of interest?
 - j. Consider how your plan fits into [recommendations for scholarly publications in medical journals](#)
3. Think about where you want to publish
 - a. What journal, conference or event?
 - i. What is its impact factor? (measure of the frequency with which the average article in a journal has been cited in a particular year) and does this matter for your publication and target audience? Impact factor often used as a proxy for the relative importance of the journal in its field.
 - ii. Is it peer reviewed? (anonymous review of your paper to set standards by two or more peers).
 - iii. Is it relevant to your topic?
 - iv. Are the editorial board credible and relevant to your field?
 - v. Is it worth contacting the editor to see if they are interested in your topic?
 - b. Read your chosen journal, conference, event.
 - i. Does what you want to do fit with their readership, style and content?
 - c. Read their author guidelines and follow them completely including
 - i. Author checklist
 - ii. Format, word count, reference style etc.
 - iii. Be aware of plagiarism checks.
 - iv. Reporting guidelines for different types of studies. See [Equator Reporting Guidelines](#) for further information.
 - v. Timelines for peer review and publication
 - vi. Consider open access costs for publication in credible peer reviewed journal (n.b be mindful of predatory journals which charge for publication)
4. Consider authorship and intellectual property
 - a. Who is 1st author and co-authors?
 - i. Decide and agree – 1st author should co-ordinate all the logistics of the submission, All authors to have agreed final content before final submission.
 - b. See [International Committee of Medical Journal Editors](#) for further information about defining role of authors (including acknowledgements).
5. Consider how your data was collected, managed and stored (e.g. consent, confidentiality etc)
6. Consider funding, sponsorship and conflicts of interest
 - a. It is usual to declare all and any funding and sponsorship sources
 - b. It is usual to declare all and any conflicts of interest – see [ICJME](#) for further information.

Top tips for getting going:

1. Follow the author guidelines completely in terms of structure, format, headings, word count etc.
 - a. Do not stray from them!
 - b. Don't be afraid to contact the editor
2. Why did you do it? (e.g. background/literature review/rationale)
 - a. Make sure you have looked at the relevant current literature.
 - b. Be clear about how you searched the literature.
 - c. Be clear about the background and rationale of the work.
3. What did you want to achieve? (e.g. aims/objectives)
 - a. Be clear so that the peer reviewers and readers know what you aware planning to achieve.
4. How did you do it? (e.g. methods/methodology)
 - a. Be transparent and accurate so that peer reviewers and readers have confidence in how and why you did what you did.
5. What did you find? (e.g. findings/results)
 - a. Have clarity about what you found – you may not need to present all your findings – only that which is relevant to this paper or argument you are making.
 - b. Do not be tempted to make assertions about your findings that you cannot back up with the evidence.
6. What does this mean? (e.g. discussion of impact, implications and conclusion)
 - a. This is your opportunity to talk about what your work means as well as relate/compare to other literature and findings.
 - b. Discuss the relevance of your findings to e.g. policy, practice, research or education.
 - c. Consider next steps or future directions.
 - d. Mention any strengths or limitations of your work.
 - e. Don't forget to think about relevance to your target audience to different groups.
 - f. Provide a succinct conclusion.
7. References, figures, diagrams, photos and images - also keep to journal house style and guidelines.
 - a. Be aware you may need to ask copyright permission to use images from other publications.
 - b. Be aware that you also need to ask for copyright permissions for work you have already published!

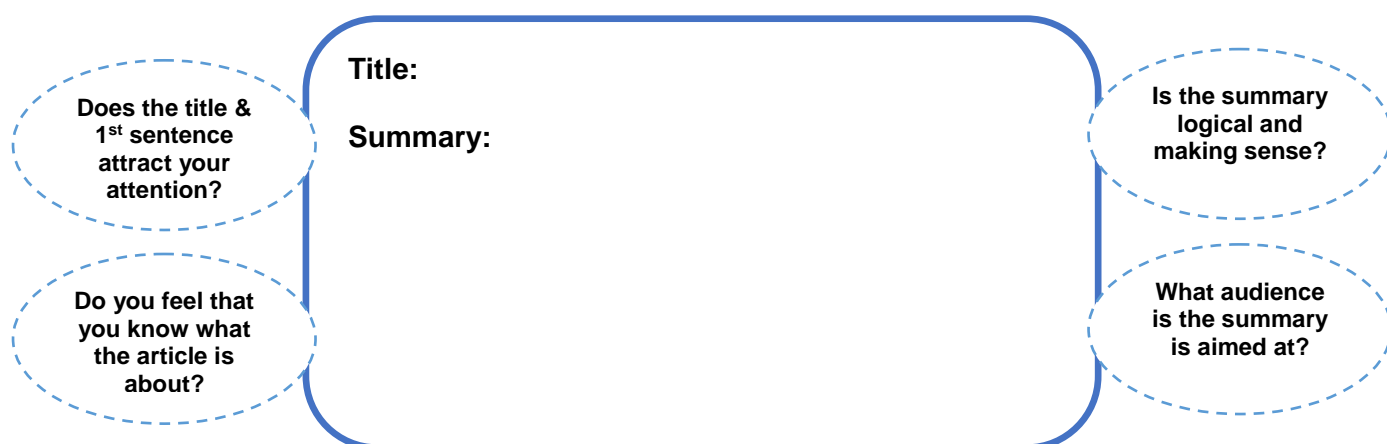
Writing tips:

1. Agree with co-authors the journal and who is writing what and by when.
2. Agree a realistic timeline.
3. Use short words where possible
4. Avoid long and rambling sentences (e.g. if you have an 'and' put a full stop)
5. Consider your paragraph structure:
 - a. Lead sentence to tell the reader what the paragraph is about
 - b. Middle section to provide the content, data, examples, examine ideas
 - c. End sentence to summarise your paragraph.
 - d. Or Point -Evidence- Explanation.
6. Avoid jargon.
7. Explain abbreviations once, the first time you use them e.g. General Practitioner (GP), Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS) etc
8. Maintain confidentiality
9. Consider the international relevance and sources of your paper
10. Use language and terms that will be understood internationally e.g. supermarket rather than 'Tesco's or train services rather than 'National Rail'.
11. Emphasise the global context of your work and its relevance to the wider community
12. Once you have finished writing:

- a. Read the paper out loud to yourself - this will help you to identify any grammatical errors.
 - b. Allow time for all co-authors to review paper and comment – agree revisions and edits.
 - c. Ask a colleague or peer to check it through for you e.g. for grammar, typos, language style as well as content and relevance. Allow yourself time to respond to their comments.
 - d. You will probably need to edit your paper significantly e.g.
 - i. Reduce the number of words.
 - ii. Replace long words or sentences with simple and clear language.
 - iii. Refine your reduced version by sharpening the meaning and removing jargon. Ensure that you check for the consistency of terms used.
 - iv. Rewrite those parts of the paper that require significant revision.
 - v. Review the accuracy, conformity, punctuation and appearance of your paper.
13. When submitting your paper, you may also need to include:
- a. A covering letter to the editor (stating authorship and that the paper has not been submitted anywhere else).
 - b. A title page
 - c. A page containing the authors details
 - d. A copyright form

Exercise

Often getting started is the hardest part of writing for publication. Take a couple of minutes now to write the title and a summary of your potential article.



Peer review:

Once you have submitted the final version of your paper in accordance with the journal's guidelines, the paper will usually undergo a process of peer review. Peer review is a sign of quality assurance. Experts will be nominated to review your paper according to the journal's own criteria. Most journals have a process of anonymous reviewing involving two or more experts (often referred to as 'blind peer review'). It is worth checking how long the peer review process takes as it can be anything from a few weeks to a few months.

Feedback:

Once the paper has been peer reviewed it will be checked by the editor. A decision will then be made to:

1. **Accept** the paper as it is
2. **Revise - minor revisions:** request revisions to be made to the paper. If the revisions are made satisfactorily the paper will be accepted
3. **Revise - major revisions and** invite resubmission of the paper once substantial changes have been made
4. **Reject** the paper with no opportunity to make revisions

5. Reasons for Rejection:

- a. Poor fit with the journal's aims
- b. Journal recently published on same subject (not original)
- c. Too much work to bring it up to standard
- d. Did not follow guidelines
- e. Poor writing style and content
- f. Poor objectives, methods, analysis, findings, discussion or conclusions
- g. Plagiarism

It is usual for your paper to require revisions – either substantial or minor edits.

- a. Acknowledge reviewers and editor's comments and note time line for response.
- b. Read the reviewers and editors comments carefully
- c. Think about them and then read your paper again and plan your revisions or rebuttals (that which you don't want to change).
- d. Revisions – discuss and agree with co-authors and make changes as suggested – where reviewers make different suggestions either take a pragmatic view or discuss again with editor.
- e. If you feel some of the suggested revisions are unjustified - provide a full explanation why you don't think they need to be changed.
- f. Be pragmatic, don't let your ego or self-esteem dictate your response. If a suggested revision is acceptable and relevant make the changes.
- g. Return your paper outlining how you have addressed each comment. Make sure you make revisions in the way suggested by the editor or reviewer.

The final stage:

Once your publication has been accepted you will receive proofs that you will need to check thoroughly for typographical errors etc. Then the paper will go to publication and you may receive either some off-prints or pdf copies of your article. Don't forget to share your publication and add to your portfolio.

Conference Posters:

Conference posters are also a really good way to share your work as well as start on the path to an article. A poster is a visual way to present your work. Different conferences have different feels and themes, so as in journal articles consider the conference audience, objectives, context and abstract guidelines carefully.

Top Tips:

- a. Have a think and keep an eye out for conferences that you might like to present a poster at.
- b. You will usually have to submit an abstract – this is often 6 – 9 months in advance of the conference.
- c. Always follow the abstract guidelines
- d. Remember that your abstract may be included in the conference proceedings or a journal.
- e. Authorship guidelines are the same as for an article so make sure you agree this before submitting.
- f. Your abstract is then peer reviewed and you hear back if it has been accepted or not. Make sure you can attend the conference because if you cannot then your poster maybe withdrawn by the organizers.
- g. Once your abstract has been accepted as a poster, always, always follow the conference poster design guidelines.
- h. Triple check the size of the poster (e.g. A0 or A1) as well as if in landscape or portrait. This is because your allocated space will be for that size only.
- i. Always make sure that you have your contact details on the poster so that people can contact you in the future
- j. Check if your organization has specific branding guidelines and polices. Consider cost.
- k. Factor in time for design, approval from your line manager and print up time. Some organizations will print up in house, others outsource – factor in delivery time as well
- l. When you go to the conference always take extra blue tack, sellotape, pins, etc etc – never assume that the organizers will have enough!

Designing the Poster and at the conference:

- a. Consider your organizational branding guidelines think about something that catches people's eyes from at least 5 meters
- b. If you are using photos or images make sure you have consent
- c. Make sure your poster content matches your abstract submission including the title.
- d. You will be allocated a poster number and often a poster time. When there are a lot of posters over a few times often organizers will e.g. tell you that you are poster 123 to be displayed 0930 -1630 on day 2. Don't put it up before then as someone else will be there!
- e. Often you will be invited to stand by your posters during conference breaks. This is so delegates can ask you questions. Don't be disheartened if few people ask you this and just take away your A4 copy – they may have a lot of posters to get through!
- f. Some conferences have poster competitions awarded on the last day – e.g. most innovative, best science etc – just be aware of this
- g. Finally, when you get back after the conference share share share your poster. Think about putting it up in its original size or print up and display as A3. Can you put it on your website. This is your amazing work.
- h. After the conference think about how you can turn it into an article.

Over to you...good luck with your publications!

Useful Resources:

Azer, S.A., Dupras, D.M. and Azer, S., 2014. Writing for publication in medical education in high impact journals. *Eur Rev Med Pharmacol Sci*, 18(19), pp.2966-81.

Coughlan, M. and Cronin, P., 2016. *Doing a literature review in nursing, health and social care*. Sage.

Epstein, D., Kenway, J. and Boden, R., 2007. *Writing for publication*. Sage.

Glasper, E.A. and Peate, I., 2013. Writing for publication: science and healthcare journals. *British Journal of Nursing*, 22(16).

Happell, B., 2008. Writing for publication: a practical guide. *Nursing standard*, 22(28), pp.35-40.

Jackson, K., Leicester and Sheldon, L., 2000. Writing for publication. *Nurse Researcher*, 7(4), pp.68-75.

Kandi, V., 2015. Peer review process, open-access publication, and ethical issues in scientific communications. *Annals of Tropical Medicine and Public Health*, 8(4), p.79.

Mligo, E.S., 2012. *Writing Academic Papers: A Resource Manual for Beginners in Higher-Learning Institutions and Colleges*. Wipf and Stock Publishers.

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<https://rcni.com/write-us/author-guide-downloads/rcni-guidance-writing-and-submitting-articles-publication-85606>

<https://guides.nyu.edu/posters>

<http://ga.lsu.edu/Effective%20Poster%20Design%20for%20Academic%20Conferences.pdf>

<http://lti.lse.ac.uk/poster-design-tips-2/>

<https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/media/livacuk/computingservices/printing/Creating.a.Poster.in.Powerpoint.2010.pdf>