

Writing and Publishing

APA Style

- › Alphabetical order
- › No issue #s
- › And vs. &
- › “et al.” after first mention
- › Do not write out all names if > 6
- › Page #s for direct quotes

Sophistication

- › Do not use:
 - Looked at/for
 - Did a study
 - Built off of
 - Said that
 - Being that
 - Tried to
 - supposedly

Word Use

- › Since, while
- › Only
 - E.g., “We only argued with the parents.”
 - “We argued with only the parents.”
- › Affect/effect
- › Higher/greater
- › Agreement: “data that haven’t” not “hasn’t”
 - Offspring that do vs. does
 - Higher levels relate, not ‘relate’

Dangling References

- › This or that what???
- › More than what?

- › Include “that” between phrases, not “the experiments she ran” but “the experiments *that* she conducted”
- › Be clear who “they” refers to
- › “men sang more loudly than women” should be followed with “did”

Say what you mean

- › “Television predicted violence”
 - “Those who watched television more often engaged in more violent acts”
- › “Partners were more aggressive”
 - “Individuals perceived their partners to be more aggressive”
- › “Women who are older will be more affectionate with their partners”
 - (compared to younger women, older men, or compared to with family members?)

Be Concise

- › Don’t use “also” twice in one sentence
- › Don’t add “or not” after “whether”
- › “challenged” vs. “made more difficult”

Avoid judgment terms

- › Better than – received higher scores, performed more efficiently

Punctuation

- › , before which, around clauses
- › ‘ placement
- › ; – do not overuse. Use in place of commas if beginning new clause
- › Commas after e.g. and i.e.



Lesson 1

- › Do not wait until the research is finished to start thinking about the written report!
- › Keep careful records while conducting research!



Lesson 2

- › Do not think of the ability to write as a gift or inspiration
- › “Repetitive actions are the essence of writing”
- › Set up a strict schedule for writing and adhere to it!
- › Build self efficacy by requiring drafts and revisions over a semester when teaching
- › Recognize that every final product began as a rough draft several iterations ago



Myths

- › Some academics write only outstanding papers
- › Those who write frequently cited papers also write lots of papers – some are influential and some are not
- › Don’t try to “match some abstract template of profundity and impact”



Know your Audience

- › Reflect clear, logical thinking
- › Demonstrate solid grasp of theoretical and methodological concepts
- › Use technical terms only when appropriate – accurately and not excessively
- › When writing for **scholars** do not define technical terms or explain why you use standard procedures (random sampling)
 - Condensed, detailed description of design
 - Close attention to how data gathered, variables measured and data analyzed

Know your Audience

- › Practitioners
 - Short summary
 - Simple charts
 - Outline of alternative paths of action, practical outcomes
 - Caution against overgeneralization
- › Public
 - Simple language, concrete examples
 - Focus on practical implications
 - No details of designs or results
 - Do not make unsupported claims

Style and Tone

- › Style = types of words, length and form of sentences
 - Formal and succinct
 - **Do not pad** – “every word should be pregnant with meaning”
- › Tone – writer’s attitude or relation to subject matter
 - Professional and serious
 - Not informal, conversational, colloquial
 - Goal is not to advocate, moralize or entertain!
 - Be objective, accurate and **clear**

Avoid moralizing and flowery language at all costs!

- › “the ever helpful... who guided me through the dimly lit halls of Yale bureaucracy and often intervened to rescue me from what would have been tragedies unavoidsed”
- › “In my darkest hours of reckless assumptions I often heard her calmly offering her implicit counsel...”
- › “and in the final hours of writing this dissertation I recurringly see the faces of X and Y, mother and father, who tended the soil from which this dissertation sprang. I wish to express my gratitude to you both in some unique and eloquent way but how can I ever truly thank you for providing us, your children, with prudent access to our most precious dreams?”

Be Detail Oriented

- › If details are sloppy (references, grammar, spelling, missing details, formatting) – readers will assume sloppiness in data collection as well
- › Do NOT rely on readers to correct errors like typos – correcting spelling and grammar detracts from ability to offer more substantive advice
- › If someone makes a suggested change – apply it broadly – not just to the ONE place it has been changed!
- › *"The recipient of advice is not a participant in a debate and the writer who fails to follow... suggestions is not triumphing over an opponent"*
 - C. Peterson

Clarity is KEY

- › Clarity more important than aesthetic beauty of sentences
 - "Accordingly, the limited gaps of our knowledge of these effects lie in any untested variables that are subject to modification and replication. For instance, will these fallacious effects be demonstrated in different environments with different enhancing stimuli beyond only people's appearances?"
 - "The purpose of this study is to strengthen the predictive reliability of fallacious reasoning made by people in situations where factors tangential to content specificity influence their decisions about receptively transmitted information."
- › Write in short declarative sentences
- › **Limit conclusions to what evidence supports**
- › More room to speculate in chapters than in empirical papers

Organization

- › Outline
 - Put ideas in sequence
 - Group related ideas together
 - Separate the more general or higher level ideas from more specific ideas
 - Synthesize rather than list studies!

Literature

- › Be familiar with literature before beginning to write but don't be afraid to return to literature review
- › New studies published.. And...
- › New questions emerge
- › ALSO give credit to original writer when paraphrasing ideas

Writing Process

- › 1. Prewriting
- › 2. Composing
 - freewriting
- › 3. Rewriting
 - Do not submit to reader without proofreading and editing!
 - Plan to rewrite first draft at least 3–4 times
 - Again – focus on CLEAR communication, not complicated language
 - Revising and editing work better after allowing some time to pass
 - Get feedback
 - Better to receive criticism when still time to change than when it is too late

Writer's Block

- › 1. Begin early (at least a week before deadline for final draft – at a minimum)
- › 2. take breaks
- › 3. begin in the middle
- › 4. magic rituals
- › 5. don't expect perfection
- › 6. break writing into small parts

Rough Drafts

- › Do not rewrite as you go along – do not try to write perfect prose from the beginning
- › Too detailed an outline can handicap writing
- › Alternate between reading and writing – flag as you go where more reading is needed
- › Some tricks – turn off monitor, dictate into recorder

Rewriting

- › 1. Mechanics
 - Grammar, spelling
- › 2. Usage
 - Key terms
- › 3. Voice
 - Active instead of passive
 - Avoid unnecessary qualifying language (seems to)
- › 4. Coherence
 - Unified ideas, transitions
- › 5. Repetition
- › 6. Structure
- › 7. Abstraction
 - Mix abstract ideas with concrete examples
- › 8. Metaphors
 - Use sparingly

Reverse Outlining

- › Outline what you have already written
 - Helps to identify misplaced paragraphs and uneven coverage of topics
- **ALWAYS clearly label each draft with date or version number so you do NOT save new over old or send older version to someone who has already edited many of its mistakes!**



Final Reflections

- › Go back and edit title and intro after final draft to accurately reflect what you actually said/wrote
- › Titles should avoid unnecessary phrases: e.g. "An investigation into....."
- › Stop when it's "good enough"



Where to Send

- › Begin at the top?
- › Consider time of review and chance of acceptance



Revising Manuscripts

Receiving Reviews



Review Outcomes

- › Reject
 - Do not re-submit
 - Considered new submission
- › Revise and Resubmit
 - Send back out to new reviewers
 - Send back out to same reviewers
 - Reviewed in house (by editor)
- › Accept with (minor) Revision



After Receiving Reviews

- › Evaluate fit between your work and the journal
- › Decide if suggested changes are possible
- › Consider other potential outlets



Perspective

- › Systems-level perspective
 - Editors and reviewers are affected by comparative information, such as other manuscripts in related areas, and other submissions to the journal, as well as their overall sense of the field
 - You must develop an understanding of how your work fits into that system (get outside of your own head)



Review Comments

- › Cover letter from editor:
 - Critiques may feel personal, misdirected, unhelpful, or incorrect
 - Most reviewers spend little time being positive



Response

- › Set aside after first read
- › Return to later after emotional response subsides
- › In re-reading focus on substance
- › Address EACH reviewer point no matter how off the mark it seems
- › Don't expect consensus



5 Areas of Concern

- › 1. substantive or theoretical
- › 2. methodological
- › 3. data analytic
- › 4. interpretive
- › 5. publication fit



Front Matter

- › Be sure nothing is overstated in title or abstract



Introduction

- › Focus!
- › Worry less about what others have said and justify your own research
- › Theoretical frameworks should be specific



Method

- › Adopt full disclosure and account for errors and discrepancies
- › Make sure interpretations and conclusions are consistent with the strengths and weaknesses of study



Results

- › Maintain ties between research ? and design of study
- › Keep order of presentation of results consistent
- › Keep important matters distinct from secondary matters
- › Avoid excessive detail



Discussion

- › Think seriously about larger implications
- › Do not leave it up to reader to figure out what it all means!



Journal Fit

- › Interest, importance, quality
- › Impact factor
- › Indexing
- › Readership in area
- › APA
- › Read mission, table of contents, page limits
- › Request reviewers
- › Attend to idiosyncratic formatting



Response Letter

- › Be specific about how you addressed each comment by reviewers
 - Usually in point by point fashion indicating pg. and line number where change was made
 - Articulate WHY you have not made any changes deemed unnecessary
 - If rebutting – use literature to support your arguments, existing data, and logic
 - **Be conciliatory** e.g. "We appreciate the reviewer's thoughtful comments" "we thank the reviewer for drawing our attention to this oversight" etc... "We agree with the reviewer that we should have considered order as a possible influence on the outcome.."

Delays

- › Appropriate to enquire after 3–4 months
- › Review times vary by area
- › If author can not submit revision in timeframe suggested **MUST** alert acting editor (AE) soon after receiving reviews

Strategies

- › Persistence may pay off
- › Wear-down
- › Requesting new review process
 - Proceed carefully!
- › Do not send to new journal without any revisions!
- › Do not ignore work of other authors with opposing or similar viewpoints