

Effective scientific writing: A skill that can be learned

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Writing is inevitable for the scientific community, and it becomes a part of all scientists.

The requirement of writing in the scientific community is very diverse. It entails producing various scientific materials, including regulatory and research documents, disease or drug-related instructional and promotional literature, journal manuscripts and abstracts, healthcare websites, health-related periodicals, and news pieces. The scientific information in these documents must be presented in a way appropriate for the target audience's level of comprehension, whether it is patients, the general public, physicians, or regulators. Medical writers must have a thorough awareness of medical concepts and terminology and knowledge of essential criteria for the style and content of specific documents. They must also have excellent writing skills (Sharma, 2010).

A good writer needs to have something to say, possess logical thinking, and follow a few simple, learnable style rules. This indicates that good writing can be learned. Yes!! We can learn to write better. Leventhal (2017) has provided a checklist to improve scientific writing (Leventhal, 2017).

A quote from 'On writing Well' by Willium Zinsser shall describe how to write better:

"The secret of good writing is to strip every sentence to its cleanest components. Every word that serves no function, every long word that could be short, every adverb that carries the same meaning that's already in the verb, every passive construction that leaves the reader unsure of who is doing what-these are the thousand and one adulterants that weaken the strength of a sentence. And they usually occur in proportion to the education and rank" (Zinsser, 2006).

From the quote, we get the overview that good writing requires:

1. Cutting the unnecessary words and phrases or cutting the clutters. Easy ways to cut down the clutters are:

- Use a word for long words.
- Remove repetitive words.
- Eliminate negatives.
- Eliminate superfluous use "there are/there is".
- Omit needless prepositions.

2. Using active voice because the use of passive voice slows down the reading process.

3. Writing with verbs. To write better, use strong verbs, avoid turning verbs into nouns and don't bury the main verb.

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To develop the skills in writing takes time and patience but to start with :

- Read, pay attention and imitate good articles.
- Write in a journal.
- Let go of "academic" writing habits. We are taught many wrong writing skills.
- Talk about your research before trying to write about it.
- Write to engage your readers, try not to bore them!
- Stop waiting for "inspiration".
- Accept that writing is hard for everyone.
- Revise as many times it is possible. Nobody gets it perfect on the first try.
- Learn how to cut ruthlessly. Never become too attached to your words.
- Find a good editor!

We can also take the help of technologies like (www.grammarly.com) which can help us rectify our mistakes.

The entire scientific community must write from one point in time. Therefore, let us learn to write better to acquire good writing skills.

Conflicts of Interest

The author reports no conflicts of interest.

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