

Online resources for improving your research writing

As a researcher, you need to write many different kinds of documents: grant proposals, manuscripts for publication, summaries of your work for non-expert audiences, reports to translate knowledge to your clinical or policy or patient partners, conference presentations, social media posts—the list seems endless.

Where can you find resources on how to write all these critical documents clearly and effectively? Luckily, you aren't the first researcher to ask that question. Online resources are abundant and practical.

Some of these resources are short and tightly focused. Others have multiple components. You can use any of them on your own, or connect with colleagues to learn and practice together.

General resources on writing style for research-related documents

[*The Science of Scientific Writing*](#), George Gopen & Judith Swan. This longer blog post gives specific tips and examples on making your research documents easy for readers to understand, even when you present highly technical information.

[*Scientific Writing Resource*](#), Duke University. These 3 lessons hit key aspects of communicating your research effectively. Lessons include numerous before-and-after examples, plus worksheets.

[*UBC webinar series on technical communication*](#), Christa Bedwin. This ongoing webinar series covers topics such as writing under tight timelines and creating highly readable documents.

[*Good jargon and bad jargon*](#), Mike Pope. The author speaks from the perspective of an editor for technical documents, but he offers good examples of how to decide on whether to use field-specific terms in a document (hint: who is your audience?).

[*Writing in the Sciences*](#), Kristin Sainani. This highly rated online course from Stanford University covers multiple topics in research writing. The [syllabus](#) links to short videos on specific topics. Videos can be accessed without registering for the course and can be viewed in any order. The instructor works through numerous practical examples.

[*Reverse Outlines*](#), Rachael Cayley. This blog post offers a simple, effective technique to check and revise the logical flow of your research document. See also the related posts on five key strategies for improving writing (menu on the right).

[*Tip Sheet: Writing in the sciences*](#). Focus on features of good science writing that differ from good general writing. The paragraph on *Audience* is key.



Visiting Scholar Program – Research Writing

Resources on writing grant applications

[Expert panel discussion: How to write a winning grant proposal](#). Video recording, plus list of resources and University of Alberta supports.

Resources on writing manuscripts

[JANE \(Journal/Author Name Estimator\)](#), an online tool for selecting a journal in which to publish your manuscript. For better results, search using your full abstract.

[Ten simple rules for structuring papers](#), Brett Mensh & Konrad Kording. Why and how to structure your manuscript for maximum impact on readers.

[Elsevier Researcher Academy: Writing for Research](#). Four short learning modules on writing manuscripts.

How to prepare a manuscript for international journals. Part 1: [Six things to do before writing your manuscript](#). Part 2: [11 steps to structuring a science paper editors will take seriously](#).

Nature Masterclasses. Short learning modules within an free online course. [Part 1: Writing a research paper](#). Includes modules on titles and abstracts, improving your writing style, and managing and presenting your data. [Part 2: Publishing a research paper](#). Includes modules on selecting a journal, understanding peer review and measuring impact of your publication.

[Think. Check. Submit. to avoid predatory publishing](#), Andrea Cortegiani & Steven L. Shafer. This article outlines the problem of predatory journals and links to a checklist (reference #5) that you can use to identify potentially predatory publishers.

[Common reasons why manuscripts are rejected: Advice for young investigators](#), Dirk M. Elston

[Writing for Science Journals: tips, tricks, and a learning plan](#), Geoff Hart (book)

Resources on writing abstracts

[How to write a good abstract for a scientific paper or conference presentation](#). Detailed suggestions and examples for writing each section of your abstract.

[How to write a quality abstract for publication or presentation](#). Before and after versions of a low quality abstract, with analysis.

Resources on writing lay summaries

Preparing plain language summaries: [Toolkit](#) and [webinar](#) recording.

[Lay Summaries](#). Heart & Stroke Foundation of Canada FAQs. Question 6 (page 5) contains detailed advice on writing a lay summary using plain language.

Visiting Scholar Program – Research Writing

Resources on writing about your research for media

[Elsevier Researcher Academy: Ensuring visibility](#). Six short learning modules on actively promoting your published manuscript.

[Writing press releases](#), Purdue University Online Writing Lab. Why, what and how, from both the researcher and audience perspectives.

[How to write a blogpost from your journal article](#), Writing for Research. This post first convinces you that a blog post about your published manuscript is both useful and easy, then walks you through 11 steps to convert your article text into an effective short-form digital version.

