

## Scientific Writing for Impact Factor Journals

Lichtfouse E. New York: Nova Science Publishers Inc, 2013. pp 87. \$52.00. ISBN: 978-1-62618-943-0

Effective scientific writing is a fundamental skill required for all researchers in order to communicate ideas and knowledge clearly and effectively. *Scientific Writing for Impact Factor Journals* is an outstanding writing guide for scientific publication. The author, Eric Lichtfouse, is the Chief Editor of the journal *Agronomy for Sustainable Development* that has been awarded the highest per cent increase in citations in the field of agricultural sciences by the essential science indicators. He is also the Chief Editor and founder of *Environmental Chemistry Letters* and books in the field. Based on his experience in the field as a chief editor, Lichtfouse has constructed his book offering tips and directions for young researchers and doctoral students on the craft of writing publishable manuscripts and scientific communication. This book is an excellent and practical, step-by-step guide in the field of writing that is supported with examples and great summarising illustrations and tables.

The book is divided into two main sections: General advice and Tips by section. The book ends with appendices that recapitulate the principal messages to serve as a quick reference.

The first section of the book, General advice, starts by discussing the common issues and mistakes in drafting scientific articles—for instance, not explaining the novelty of the paper, presenting non-explained results or those that lack focus and the poor use of figures and tables. In this section, the book also discusses common writing mistakes made by some non-English speakers, such as long complex texts, use of orphan sentences and a vague, third person narrative style. For each issue discussed in this section, tools and strategies are suggested to improve the writing of scientific manuscripts.

The first section of the book also identifies two essential qualities for publishing an article: novelty and communication. Since scientific papers should progress the

current knowledge in a field, novelty stands as a crucial criterion of the manuscript. In this section, the book describes how novelty can take different forms in the manuscript, such as being a new hypothesis, concept and/or mechanism or in the form of first observations or explorations. Authors can identify the novelty of their work by comparing results with what is published in the literature or through discussions with other researchers. Moreover, since scientific papers are communication tools to transfer knowledge from one individual to another, it should be able to clearly communicate ideas and results.

In this section, the book emphasises the impact of the advances in communication on bibliographic research and the writing skills. Communication has advanced from being paper based to the current Internet-based publishing. Therefore, bibliographic research has changed from the researchers having access to a limited number of journals that are physically available in libraries to their accessing millions of electronically available articles. The writing has changed from being a structured and focused script with agreeably designed figures to a fast-computer-based writing that is usually fragmented and hard to read and with many figures. Therefore, this section presents techniques for improvement, such as using a problem–solution format and focusing the paper on a few novel results—which will help overcome ambiguous structures. Thus, the author presents his new publishing technique, the micro-article that helps researchers to focus, in the final manuscript, on the few novel findings.

Furthermore, this section highlights the importance of the educational elements of an article. It points out the main areas that should be educational and understandable by broader based, less specialised readers. The first section ends with an insight into the main stages of the editorial publication process. Here, the section covers all the stages from receiving the article by the journal and the pre-selection process to the publishing and marketing stage. Moreover, it highlights the common and potential issues that surface when an article is submitted for publication. Understanding these steps

is essential to avoiding most of the common mistakes done, mostly by young researchers; this part of the book is therefore particularly valuable.

The second section of the book, Tips by section, is dedicated to a description of the general structure of a research article. It discusses the typical structure and the right content for each section. It gives useful tips for presenting concepts and data and instructions for making figures and writing their legends. In this section of the book, from his experience as a journal editor, the author provides examples of typical mistakes done by researchers and suggests correcting tips. This section is supported with excellent illustrations that make it easy to follow the content and serves as a handy writing resource.

From my personal perspective, Lichtfouse's book *Scientific Writing for Impact Factor Journals* is a comprehensive, practical and clearly written writing guide. The organisation of the book is agreeable and it contains insightful allegories to elucidate the content of the book. The author provides enough examples to make the reading enjoyable, memorable and instructive. The book is an outstanding essential resource for young researchers and a useful guide for research departments and scientific libraries.

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