Writing the Paper

Scientific language:

High quality - simple writing:

- Increases chance of acceptance
- Increases the impact of the manuscript

Poorly written and complicated manuscripts:

- Irritates - Editor, Reviewer, Reader
- Difficult to understand scientific concepts scientific concepts

Scientific writing is concise, logical, clear, exact, not literary or poetic

- Clarity -> simple and direct expression of ideas
- Brevity -> avoid long and complicated sentences
- Accuracy - > be specific and precise (without exaggerating or overstating)

Golden rule : KISSS - Keep It Short, Simple and Scientific

Writing the Paper

Scientific language:

Use short sentences. A sentence made of more than 40 words should probably be rewritten as two sentences.

Instead of:	Write:
possess	have
sufficient	enough
utilize	use
demonstrate	show
assistance	help
terminate	end

Instead of:	Write:
prior to	before
due to the fact that	because
in a considerable number of cases	often
the vast majority of	most
during the time that	when
in close proximity to	near
it has long been known that	I'm too lazy to look up the reference

Writing the Paper

Scientific language:

Spelling and Grammar

- There is no excuse for poor grammar or spelling
- Use a spellchecker but be careful be careful, they don't correct all errors
- Mistakes can take some credibility away from the author

Scientific language:

Complaint from a Reviewer

"This paper fell well below my threshold. I refuse to spend time trying to unterstand what the author is trying to say. Besides, I really want to send a message that they can´t submit garbage to us and expect us to fix it. My rule of thumb is that if there are more than 6 grammatical errors in the abstract, then I don´t waste my time carefully reading the rest."

Writing the Paper

Scientific language:

Spelling and Grammar - Verb Tenses

- Abstract ➔ Present and Past
- Introduction ➔ Mostly in the present tense (established facts, previously published data)
- Material and Methods ➔ Past tense
- Results ➔ Past
- Discussion / Conclusion ➔ Mix Past, Present and sometimes Future

Writing the Paper

Scientific language:

Spelling and Grammar – Active voice

- Use the first person if you are the sole author
- Do not use an impersonal style
- Use “eu” /I or “nós” /We, it is shorter, simpler and less pompous

- **Passive voice**: *“It has been found that there had been…”*
- **Active voice**: *“We found that…”*
- **Avoid abbreviations**: *“it’s”, “weren’t”, “hasn’t”*

Never use them in scientific writing

- **Minimize use of adverbs**: *“However”, “In addition”, “Moreover”*
- Eliminate redundant phrases
- Double-check unfamiliar words or phrases

Writing the Paper

Scientific language:

Numbers, Italics and Abbreviations

- Numerals
  - -For Spanish or Portuguese language magazine use 13.5
  - -For English language magazine use 13.5
  - -Preferable: 0.123 / Avoid: .123
  - -For times of day use 24:00 19:15 instead of 7.15 pm
- Italics
  - -For some words or phrases in other languages italics should be used
  - -For addresses, building names, organisation names italics should not be used
  - -When indicating number of individuals in tables, figures or between ( ) the abbreviation used is n = not italicised
- Abbreviations
  - -It is recommended to avoid its use in the title
  - -The first time an abbreviation is used it should be preceded by the term in its developed form, followed by the abbreviation in parenthesis

Writing the Paper

Scientific language:

Peer review: Dealing with reviewers' reports

- Read it, and talk to a supervisor
- Distance yourself for a few days to calm down
- Make the suggested changes
- When you submit the revised work, send a reply to the reviewers, mentioning how you have taken the comments
- If you disagree, explain why
- Be considerate, usually the reviewer is helping
- If you think the reviewers are not being fair, ask for a second opinion
- This step should only be taken when the manuscript is rejected and you feel you can submit it to another journal

Writing the Paper

Scientific language:

Peer review: Answering to reviewers

- All comments from reviewers must be answered point by point
- Copy the reviewers' comments into a Word document and respond to each comment
- List each comment in full, followed by the responses
- Suggested format:

  Reviewer 1 comment 1:

  Response:
- Also submit 2 copies of the manuscript:
  1. With changes made flagged
  2. Cleaned with all revisions included

Writing the Paper

Scientific language:

Peer review: Answering to reviewers

Comment 1: "The authors failed to include a recent article on this topic by Smith et al."
Response: We appreciate the reviewer bringing the article by Smith et al. to our attention. We have added it to our Discussion section on page 12, paragraph 2, "Smith et al. found results similar to this study in their retrospective analysis…"

Comment 2: "The Discussion section is often confusing and poorly written."
Response: We apologize for the lack of clarity in the Discussion section. We have re-written the entire section so that it is now clearer. We agree that discussing procedures A and B together could be confusing so we have separated them into their own paragraphs and included the strengths and limitations of using each procedure. We hope that the reviewer finds these changes to improve the readability of the Discussion.

Comment 3: "The authors have clearly outlined their statistical analysis."
Response: We thank the reviewer for his/her kind remark.

Writing the Paper

Scientific language:

Peer review: and finally

Strictly adhere to the instructions to the authors:

- Do exactly as the instructions dictate – no more, no less - makes life easier for the reviewer
- Avoid basic errors
- Never submit a manuscript to more than one journal at journal at the same time
- Submit a manuscript that is relevant and original to the readers of the journal