Contents

Acknowledgments xi

- 1 Why Write Science in Plain English? I
- Before You Write 6

Audience 6

Register 7

Tone 10

3 Tell a Story 12

Make Characters Subjects and Their Actions Verbs 12

Use Strong Verbs 16

Place Subjects and Verbs Close Together 18

4 Favor the Active Voice 22

Benefits of Active Voice 22

Proper Uses of Passive Voice 25

5 Choose Your Words with Care 29

Use Short Words Instead of Long Ones 30

Keep Terms the Same 32

Break Up Noun Strings 35

Rethink Technical Terms 36

6 Omit Needless Words 40

Redundancy 41

Metadiscourse and Transition Words 44

Affirmatives and Negatives 48

7 Old Information and New Information 52

Put Old Information at Beginnings of Sentences 52

Put New Information at Ends of Sentences 53

- 8 Make Lists Parallel 60
- 9 Vary the Length of Your Sentences 63
- 10 Design Your Paragraphs 67

Issue 67
Development 68
Conclusion 69
Point 71

11 Arrange Your Paragraphs 75

Chronological Order 75
General to Specific 76
Least Important to Most Important 78
Problem to Solution 79
Compare and Contrast 81
Transition Words Revisited 83

Appendix 1 Basic Writing Concepts 87

Appendix 2 Exercise Key 92

Index 121