

Contents

1	Research Papers: Titles and Abstracts	1
1	Whole paper: Concentrate above all on readability; grammar is generally less important.	1
2	Titles: Ensure your title as specific as possible. Delete unnecessary words.	3
3	Titles: Avoid ‘clever’ titles.	5
4	Abstracts: Be concise - especially in the first sentence.	6
5	Abstracts: Don’t begin the abstract with non key words.	7
6	Abstracts: Make it clear why the purpose of your investigation is important.	8
7	Abstracts: Clearly differentiate between the state-of-the-art and what you did in your research.	9
8	Structured Abstracts - Background: Be careful of tense usage.	11
9	Abstracts: When writing a single paragraph, write it like a ‘structured abstract’.	12
10	Abstract and Introduction: Avoid the word ‘attempt’ and avoid making bold statements beginning with ‘this is the first ...’	14
2	Research Papers: Introduction and Literature Review	15
11	Introduction: Avoid information that readers will already be very familiar with.	15
12	Introduction: Describe the structure of your paper in a way that enables readers to navigate the paper easily.	17
13	Review of the literature: prioritize clarity over consistency when deciding what tense to use.	18
14	Review of the Literature and Discussion: Think about whether the first few words of a sentence add value for the reader or not. Be as concise as possible.	19
15	Review of the literature and Discussion: Delete all unnecessary verbs.	20

3	Research Papers: Methods, Results, Tables	21
16	Methods: Use the past to describe what you did, but use the present to describe any protocols / regulations / typical steps....	21
17	Methods: Be careful to use the right tense in a <i>which</i> clause when a series of steps are being described.	22
18	Methods: Indicate the sequence of steps by putting <i>firstly</i> , <i>secondly</i> , <i>finally</i> etc at the beginning of the sentences.....	23
19	Methods: Put the steps in chronological order. Put dates at the beginning.	24
20	Results: Ensure the reader understands whether you are talking about your results or what has already been established by others. Generally speaking, use the past tense to report your results.	25
21	Results: Do not write long descriptions of your results if these could easily be put in a table. And do not repeat information that is clearly shown in a table, instead interpret it.	27
22	Tables: Use the simple present to describe what the table does, and the past to discuss what the table shows.	28
23	Tables: In captions, and when referring to figures and tables, use the least words possible.....	29
24	Tables: Avoid redundancy by avoiding repetitions.	30
4	Research Papers: Discussion, Conclusions, Review Papers	31
	THE DISCUSSION	31
25	Limitations: Don't finish your paper by talking about your limitations. Consider relocating the limitations to earlier in the Conclusions, or to the Discussion.	32
26	Limitations: Don't just list your limitations, justify them.	33
27	Conclusions: Don't write your Conclusions in a hurry.	34
28	Conclusions: End with something memorable and comprehensible.....	35
29	Conclusions: Highlight the importance of your work by putting key findings at the beginning of the sentence, not at the end. Be as detailed as possible.....	36
30	Review papers: Think about what readers really want to learn, and present this info in an-easy-to-navigate way.	37
5	Readability and Avoiding Redundancy	39
31	Readability: Just because your paper or chapter is published doesn't mean that anyone will actually read it.	39
32	Readability: Confused or vague writing tends to lead to a confused reader. Write clearly and logically.....	41
33	Readability: The first words of a paragraph or sentence should immediately tell the reader what the subject is.	42
34	Readability: Do not be vague - use specific rather than generic terms.	43

35	Readability: Avoid vague adjectives and adjectives that add no extra information..	45
36	Readability: Ensure readers can understand whose research you are referring to.	46
37	Readability: Avoid a colloquial style and idiomatic expressions.. . . .	47
38	Readability: Do not use synonyms to avoid repeating a key word. . . .	48
39	Readability: Don't use a pronoun before the noun it refers to has been mentioned, or when there is more than one noun that the pronoun could refer to.. . . .	50
40	Readability: Ensure it is clear what 'this' refers to in phrases such as 'this study'.. . . .	52
41	Readability: Avoid <i>the former</i> and <i>the latter</i>	53
42	Readability: Do not use <i>the</i> when talking in general. Use <i>the</i> when talking about your specific cases.. . . .	55
43	Readability: Avoid unclear references to other papers and other parts of your paper.. . . .	56
44	Readability: When referring to your own geographical area and administrative units, don't assume your readers have the same level of knowledge as you do.. . . .	57
45	Readability: With certain exceptions (<i>etc.</i> , <i>e.g.</i> , <i>i.e. in vivo</i> , <i>in vitro</i>), avoid Latin expressions.. . . .	58
46	Readability: When highlighting important information, consider beginning a new sentence or paragraph.	59
47	Readability: When highlighting important information, be as concise and precise as possible.	61
48	Readability: Avoid unnecessary adjectives. Don't say <i>This is innovative / important / interesting</i> etc. Instead explain how or why it is innovative.. . . .	62
49	Readability: If the verb does not give key information, choose the most common / shortest verb possible in order not to distract the reader.. . . .	64
50	Readability: Prefer verbs to nouns in sentences that already contain a high proportion of nouns.	65
51	Redundancy: The more you write/say, the more mistakes you will make.	67
52	Redundancy: Reduce generic words to a minimum.	68
53	Redundancy: Remove unnecessary synonyms or repeated constructions.. . . .	70
54	Redundancy: Delete generic phrases. Just be specific. If words in parentheses are important, remove the parentheses.	72
55	Redundancy: Consider using an adjective rather than a noun.. . . .	73
56	Redundancy: Consider (shorter) alternatives for <i>allow/permit/enable</i>	74

6	Word Order, Sentence Length and Paragraphing	75
57	Word order: subject + main verb + object + indirect object (all as close together as possible).	75
58	Word order: Ensure the reader will understand immediately where the sentence is going.	77
59	Word order: Put the key concept as near as possible to the beginning of a sentence. Never at the end.	79
60	Word order: Shift subject to the beginning of the sentence by deleting redundancy or rearranging the link words.	80
61	Word order: Negations contain key information. Put them as near as possible to the beginning of the sentence.	82
62	Word order: Keep <u>the reason for doing x</u> as close as possible to the explanation of <u>how you did x</u> .	83
63	Word order: Don't indiscriminately stack nouns together.	84
64	Sentence length: Divide up a long sentence when it contains two or more distinct ideas.	85
65	Sentence length: Learn the right way to break up a long sentence.	87
66	Sentence length: Short sentences are good, but not every sentence has to be short.	88
67	Paragraphs: Consider avoiding a series of single-sentence paragraphs or a series of short paragraphs.	89
68	Paragraphs: Don't use long paragraphs.	91
7	Punctuation, Spelling, Using Google	93
69	Punctuation: Use commas to help your reader understand. But ensure they do not interrupt the flow of reading.	93
70	Punctuation: Revise any sentences that contain multiple punctuation marks.	95
71	Punctuation: Put a comma before <i>and</i> to avoid possible ambiguity. Use semicolons to divide items into groups.	96
72	Punctuation and readability: Be careful of how you use acronyms.	97
73	Spelling: Be consistent with the spelling of the same word. Always do a final spell check.	98
74	Google: Do not use Google Translate to check your English.	99
75	Google: Learn how to use Google Scholar effectively to check your English.	102
8	Project Proposals, Journal Submissions, and Emails In General	105
76	Project proposals: Put yourself in the reviewer's shoes.	105
77	Project proposals: Make your proposal stand out by being reviewer-friendly and by differentiating it from competing proposals.	107
78	Journal submissions: Check your spelling, punctuation, use of capitalization before sending your paper to a language editing service.	109

79	Journal submissions: Adopt a neutral style when checking status of your paper. No accusations.	111
80	Journal submissions: If you are the reviewer, do not make generic comments about the poor quality of the English. Ensure you give a few concrete examples, or consider not making any comments at all.	112
81	Journal submissions: Don't delay publication by asking the editors/reviewers questions. Only challenge when strictly necessary.....	114
82	Rebuttal letters and emails in general: Always be positive, never angry.	116
83	Journal submissions: Be concise when writing your reply (rebuttal letter) to the reviewers' report.....	117
84	Journal submissions: Ensure your English is correct when writing your reply to the reviewers' report.	119
85	Journal submissions: If your paper has been edited by a professional agency but is rejected for 'poor English', don't immediately blame the agency.....	120
86	Fake services: Beware of dubious services offered by editing agencies, journals and conference organizers	122
87	Emails: Don't underestimate the importance of writing good emails	124
88	Emails: Make your subject line as specific as possible, and in the body only include relevant info.....	125
89	Emails: Use the same quality standards in English as you would in your own language.	126
90	Emails: Be specific about deadlines	127
91	Emails: Be positive and diplomatic when criticizing the work of others.	128
9	Presentations	131
92	Presentations: Remember all the bad presentations you have seen and accept that your presentation may be no better.	131
93	Presentations: Don't fill your slides with text. When you've finished your presentation look at it using the option 'slide sequence' - does it look clear and simple?	133
94	Presentations: Ensure your title slide will immediately attract the attention of your audience (part 1).	134
95	Presentations: Ensure your title slide will immediately attract the attention of your audience (part 2).	136
96	Presentations: Consider having fun titles/double titles.	138
97	Presentations: Background slide: Don't cut & paste paragraphs from other texts.....	140
98	Presentations: Presenting and talking about statistics.....	142

99	Presentations: Don't overload audience with info. Make your statistics come alive by i) making comparisons and ii) activating your audience's brain.....	144
100	Presentations: Final slide - Writing <i>Thanks for your attention</i> is not enough.	148
	About the Authors	151
	Acknowledgements	153
	Index	155