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## Scientific Editing and Research Communication Core

### How to write with your reader in mind



Adapted from "Neural Starry Night E-card", by BioRender.com (2020). Retrieved from <https://app.biorender.com/biorender-templates>

An often overlooked aspect of scientific writing is the need to focus on the reader. This is important because if the reader is unable to follow your logic, the purpose of your scholarly activity is upended. Below are some tips to make your reader's job easier.

#### Know your audience

Context is critical to telling a compelling story. Including the right amount requires that you identify your audience (ideally by the time you begin to write) and tailor what you write to its needs.

- For research manuscripts, the context needed will depend on the breadth of the audience.
  - For an interdisciplinary readership, emphasize the bigger-picture implications.
  - For a discipline-specific readership, focus more on the details of the research question.
- For grant proposals, the context needed will depend on the funding agency.
  - Tailor context to the reviewers (discipline-specific, generalists, and/or non-scientists).
  - Tailor context so it is clear how the proposal addresses the mission of the agency.

#### Make critical information easy to find

Put information where readers expect to find it.

- For research manuscripts
  - Follow the journal-specific structural and formatting requirements.
  - Put the relevant content where the reader expects to find it.
- For grant proposals
  - Structure content according to the instructions in the agency-specific guidelines.
  - When review criteria are known, address them in the relevant section.
  - Format neatly and with intention.
    - Highlight judiciously to make key terms stand out.
    - Leave white space to avoid overwhelming the reader.
    - Be consistent with the format of headers and subheaders.

#### Make information easy to digest

- Define field-specific terminology and abbreviations the first time they are used.
- Be concise – avoid extraneous detail that distracts from the overall story.
- Use established techniques to improve the clarity of your writing.
  - When structuring paragraphs
    - Use topic sentences to orient the reader and create a smooth flow.
    - Use summary sentences to give the reader the main takeaway of each paragraph (this

### Upcoming Opportunities

#### Have a question about writing grants or research articles?

[Email us](#) your question and we'll answer it in a future newsletter.

#### NIH Request for Information on Proposed Simplified Review Framework for NIH Research Project Grant Applications

NIH is soliciting public input on a proposed plan to revise and simplify the peer review framework for research project grant (RPG) applications. The goal is to facilitate the mission of scientific peer review – identification of the strongest, highest-impact research.

[More information](#) | [Comment on the proposed plan](#)

#### NIH Center for Scientific Review: Early Career Reviewer (ECR) Program

The program aims to help early career scientists (e.g., Assistant Professor or equivalent) become more competitive as grant applicants through first-hand experience with peer review and to enrich and diversify CSR's pool of trained reviewers. Eligibility criteria apply.

[Additional details](#)

#### Grant Writing Webinar Series: Writing a competitive application

*Sponsored by the National Institute of General Medical Sciences (NIGMS/NIH)*

This webinar recording discusses how to acquire and structure the feedback needed to develop a strong application, effective practices for grant writing and revising, and the NIH funding decision process.

[Access the recording](#)

#### Hardin Open Workshops:

##### NIH Data Management and Sharing Plans

Jan 17, 2:00 pm–3:00 pm (Zoom)

Feb 8, 10:00 am–11:00 am (Zoom)

These plans will be required for NIH-funded proposals starting Jan. 25, 2023. This session will help you create a well-written plan by digging into the types of data in your proposed project; standards for data and metadata; how to select a repository; how to address preservation and access requirements; and considerations for accessing, reusing, and redistributing data. Examples and UI and NIH resources will be discussed. Bring your draft plan if you have one.

[Register or request a session for your group](#)

#### Hardin Open Workshops:

##### Data Management Essentials

In this workshop, you will learn how to securely store and organize data, track changes to your files, create accompanying documentation, and submit your data for publication. These strategies will be directly applicable to developing Data Management and Sharing Plans, which will be required by the NIH starting Jan 25, 2023.

[Request a session for your group](#)

#### Virtual NIH Grants Conference

February 1 & 2, 2023

- can avoid misinterpretation).
- When structuring sentences
  - Provide context in the topic position (at the beginning of the sentence).
  - Provide new information in the stress position (at the end of the sentence) to give it emphasis.

**Solicit detailed feedback**

The importance of seeking feedback from those in and outside your field cannot be overstated. Start writing early enough to allow others to analyze your work critically – and to give yourself sufficient time to act on their suggestions.

Happy writing!

Jennifer Barr and the SERCC editing team

**Resources**

- [The Science of Scientific Writing](#) by George Gopen and Judith Swan
  - Writing principles for achieving clarity in scientific writing
- [How to Write a Research Manuscript](#) by Deborah Frank
  - A step-by-step guide for turning high-quality data into a high-quality manuscript
- [SERCC Writing tips](#) for research articles
  - Tips for writing each major section of a research article

Two days of sessions designed to clarify the NIH grants process and policies, as well as provide the latest news and information. There will also be opportunities to engage with NIH staff and to access an on-demand library of related resources. [View the schedule](#) | [Register](#)

**Technology Commercialization Series**

Feb 2, 3:00 pm–4:30 pm ([Zoom](#))

Mar 2, 3:00 pm–4:30 pm ([Zoom](#))

The UI Research Foundation (UIRF) offers the courses "Disclosure and Intellectual Property (IP)" and "Licensing and Commercialization" to UI faculty, staff, and students. These courses are independent of one another and discussion based. Participants do not need to be currently working with the UIRF and are encouraged to bring questions.

[More information and to register](#)

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