How To Get Your Paper Rejected

I used to hate writing assignments, but now I enjoy them.

I realized that the purpose of writing is to inflate weak ideas, obscure poor reasoning, and inhibit clarity.

With a little practice, writing can be an intimidating and impenetrable fog! Want to see my book report?

"The dynamics of interbeing and monological imperatives in *Dick and Jane*: a study in psychic transrelational gender modes."

Academia, here I come!
Is Writing Important??

- It improves quality of your research
  - It forces you to better understand what you’re doing and often leads to new project ideas
- We need communicate ideas, not only to create them.
- Even if ideas are great, when nobody can understand them, they are useless
- Getting accepted is one thing, having impact is another one
"We are all apprentices of a craft where no one ever becomes a master. “

~ Earnest Hemingway

• It doesn’t have much to do with being a native speaker

• Good writing is impossible in the absence of clear thinking

• Good writing doesn’t come in a single session
Good writing is re-writing. This means you need to start writing the paper early!
Where to Publish

Journal

- Long turn-around time
- But “archival”
- Can have a dialog with reviewers and editor.

Conference

- Immediate feedback
- Publication within 6 or 7 months.
- One-shot reviewing. Sometimes the reviewing is sloppier.
When to Write ??

Write a Paper When You Have Something to Write

I think we've got enough information now, don't you?

All we have is one 'fact' you made up.

That's plenty. By the time we add an introduction, a few illustrations, and a conclusion, it will look like a graduate thesis.

Besides, I've got a secret weapon that will guarantee me a good grade. No teacher can resist this!

A clear plastic binder! Pretty professional looking, eh?

I don't want co-author credit on this, OK?

Man alive! Can you believe what my teacher wrote on my report?

She says I obviously did no research whatsoever on bats and that my scientific illustration looks like I traced the Batman logo and added fangs.

She's pretty perceptive. She didn't even give me credit for my professional clear plastic binder!

What did your parents have to say?

Nothing. And if you'll give me a hand here, it will stay that way.
Copy and Paste/ Plagiarism
The most dangerous mistake you can make when writing your paper is assuming that the reviewer will understand the point of your paper.
Your paper will get rejected unless:

- Tell what your paper is about
- What problem it solves
- Why the problem is interesting
- What is really new in your paper (and what isn't)
- You must make your paper easy to read
- You've got to make it easy for anyone to understand
“Tell them what you're going to tell them; then tell them; then tell them what you told them”
Structure of a Paper

- Title
- Abstract
- Introduction answers “why?”
- Technical details answers “when, where, how, how much?”
- Results answers “what?”
- Discussion answers “so what?”
- Conclusion
- Appendix
Title

- Informative and specific
- Concise
- Understandable
- All nouns are capitalized in the title
- Goal: Encourage the reader to read the paper
Abstract : Why do we write abstracts?

- Readers can assess the relevance of your work to their own simply by reading your abstract.
- Your intended audience should be able to understand the abstract without having to read any of the paper.
- Abstract is usually the first thing that readers read, and based on that abstract, make a judgment whether to keep reading or not.
- Abstract is one of the most important elements of a paper.
Abstract

- The abstract summarizes your research in one paragraph.

- The abstract includes results.

- The language is concise and easy-to-read.
Introduction

- Inform reader of the relevance of your research
- It includes a short history or relevant background that leads to a statement of the problem that is being addressed.
- It usually follow a *funnel* style, starting broadly and then narrowing.
- They funnel from something known, to something unknown, to the question the paper is asking.
Be precise, complete, and concise: include only relevant information

No unnecessary details, anecdotes, excuses, or confessions.

It includes reasons why the team took certain measurements or chose to use certain equations.
Present the data using graphs and tables to reveal any trends that you found.

Describe these trends to the reader.

The Results section is supposed to objectively describe your research results,

It is actually slightly subjective in the choice and order of findings presented.
Discussion

- Interpret your results: evaluate, analyze, explain the significance and implications of your work
- Generalizations that you can draw from your results, principles that you support/disprove
- Conclusions about theoretical and/or practical implications
- Explain key limitations: questions left unanswered, major experimental constraints, lack of correlation
Conclusion

- Conclusions should synthesize the results of your paper and separate what is significant from what is not.
- Ideally, they should add *new* information and observations that put your results in perspective.
- Here's a simple test: if somebody reads your conclusions before reading the rest of your paper, will they fully understand them? If the answer is "yes," there's probably something wrong.
- A good conclusion
  - says things that become significant after the paper has been read
  - gives perspective to sights that haven't yet been seen at the introduction
  - is about the implications of what the reader has learned
(1) Start by stating which problem you are addressing, keeping the audience in mind. They must care about it, which means that sometimes you must tell them why they should care about the problem.

(2) Then state briefly what the other solutions are to the problem, and why they aren't satisfactory. If they were satisfactory, you wouldn't need to do the work.

(3) Then explain your own solution, compare it with other solutions, and say why it's better.

(4) At the end, talk about related work where similar techniques and experiments have been used, but applied to a different problem.
I'm not a very good writer, but I'm an excellent rewriter. ~James Michener

The beautiful part of writing is that you don't have to get it right the first time, unlike, say, a brain surgeon. ~Robert Cormier

The time to begin writing an article is when you have finished it to your satisfaction. By that time you begin to clearly and logically perceive what it is you really want to say. ~Mark Twain
### Sample Writing Process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Steps</th>
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| **Prewriting** | • Make notes, scribble ideas: start generating text, drawing figures, sketching out presentation ideas.  
• Ignore neatness, spelling, and sentence structure—get the ideas down.  
• Analyze audience and purpose to focus your writing. |
| **Writing** | • Start with whatever section is easiest to write.  
• Skip around to different sections as needed.  
• Keep writing. |
| **Revision** | • Work on content first, then structure, then style.  
• Keep focused on your main purpose: communicating, reasoning, presenting clearly.  
• Get feedback.  
• Circle back to prewriting as needed. |
| **Editing** | • Check all data for accuracy.  
• Review for grammatical, mechanical, and usage errors. |
| **Proofread** | • Print and read your report/paper again. Often we don't see errors online as easily as we do on a hard copy. |
References

- Courses on Coursera
  - Writing in the Sciences
  - How to Write and Publish a Scientific Paper
  - Technical Writing

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- Peter Thrower 'Eight reasons I rejected your article', Elsevier, Posted on 12 September 2012
- [https://www.nature.com/scitable/ebooks/englishcommunication-for-scientists](https://www.nature.com/scitable/ebooks/englishcommunication-for-scientists)
- Shewchuk, “Three Sins of Authors in Computer Science and Math” (1997)
- Re-read articles you or others admire and imitate their better aspects