Outline

• Why write?
• Process
• Format
• Publishing
• Resources
What is the point of writing?

• be clear about what you hope to accomplish by writing

• what are your personal/professional goals?

• what is the point of the research?

• what is the point of this specific article?

• how can that best be accomplished?
What are Editors Looking For?

- work that addresses an important question
- up-to-date and original work
- high quality work
  - appropriate methodology
  - rigorous, in-depth, innovative
- well-written and presented
Write for a Specific Audience

- Write with a specific group of readers in mind
- Write for a specific journal
- Write for a journal you want to read
- Write to join a conversation in which you want to take part
- Write to reach a specific audience, to have a specific impact on a particular question or issue that is current
- Write to lay the foundation for future work
Write for a Specific Journal

– Read the journals where you plan to publish to understand the state of the field, the current issues, and your place in the conversation
– Rank order several journals to identify where you may send it (based on type of material they publish and impact factor)
– Publish in the best journal you can but do not let it stifle your creativity (more specialized journals may give you more scope)
Write for a Specific Audience

– Write a detailed outline for the paper and for each section

– However, in the process of writing you may clarify your thinking and discover new ideas

– Hence, it is important to have a period in the writing process to write freely, without concern about your own ‘inner editor’
Structure of a Scientific Article

• Title, Authors, Contact information
• Abstract (structured or not)
• Keywords (in addition to obvious descriptors in title)
• Body Text
• References
• Tables & Figures
Structure of the Text

• Introduction (topic, rationale, objectives)
• Background, literature review
• Hypotheses (or research questions)
• Methods (setting & sample, instruments and measures, procedure, ethical considerations)
• Data Analysis
• Results
• Discussion
• Conclusion
Plan of Writing

• Results (Tables, Case Examples, Themes, Narrative extracts)
• Discussion
• Methods (setting & sample, instruments and measures, procedure, ethical considerations)
• Data Analysis
• Background, literature review [usually done before as part of developing project or grant submission]
• Introduction (topic, rationale, objectives)
• Conclusion
• Abstract, Keywords, Acknowledgements
Editing & Revision

• Put it away for a few days or weeks and then read it again as though it is someone else’s work.

• Revise carefully.

• Ask 2 or 3 colleagues to read it (at least one who is expert in the area and one who is a general reader). Ask them to identify areas that are unclear or difficult to follow.

• Revise it again.

• If needed, hire a technical editor to edit the grammar & style.

• Review and revise again.
Journal Submission

- Follow journal style carefully (APA format, etc.)
- Use bibliographic, style editing software (e.g. Endnote)
- Submit in requested format (usually electronically)
- Use simple cover letter to attest to authorship and originality; mention if paper has some unique characteristic (e.g. ‘the first study of X in Y’) or if linked to recent articles or debate in journal mention this to the editor
After submission...

- Wait 3 weeks for an acknowledgment of receipt
- Contact journal by e-mail if no acknowledgement received.
- Wait 2-3 months for editorial response (interval depends on the journal) contact if none received.
- Respond to request for revisions promptly and send revised paper in.
- The whole cycle (to publication) can take many months to years.
Conditional Acceptance

• Accepted with corrections: essentially your paper is accepted if you can comply with the requested changes

• Do requested corrections or changes promptly

• Write a letter to the editor clearly explaining how you responded to each of the reviewers’ comments or suggestions (number and quote the reviewers and your own revised text)

• If you choose not to make some changes recommended by the reviewers state why clearly and with references if necessary
Revise and Resubmit

• No guarantee that your paper will be published but the journal editor is trying to encourage you (you have a “foot in the door”)

• Decide if you can address the major concerns or if you should consider re-submitting to a different journal

• Undertake thorough revision (may need to do new reading and new data analysis)

• Include cover letter as with conditional exception but even more detail—this is your chance to show the reviewers and the editors that you have listened carefully and taken their critique seriously

• Do not do just a “cosmetic job”
Rejection

• Everyone experiences this—even excellent scientists and writers. Do not despair, do not give up

• Review the reasons for rejection and divide them into those you agree with and those you do not accept

• If there are few valid criticisms, reformat the paper and send it out right away to the next journal on your list

• If there are valid criticisms that you can address, revise the paper accordingly before sending it out again

• If there are fundamental flaws in design or presentation then go back to the drawing board: read more literature, re-design the study, collect new data, re-analyze the data, or find a new angle on your existing data that makes it interesting

• Do not despair, do not give up: there is a home for every good piece of work.
Your Manuscript is Accepted

• Send any missing information requested by the journal
• Let journal know where you can be reached so that they can send you editorial queries
• Review galley proofs carefully and make any needed corrections
• Obtain reprints or pdf file and send copies to colleagues and supervisors (maintain mailing list)
• Respond to reprint requests and queries with your relevant publications
• Apply what you have learned from the publishing experience to providing constructive reviewers for other potential authors
Resources

• Free writing and other approaches
• APA and other styles manuals and templates [http://www.apastyle.org/learn/]
• EndNote and other bibliographic programs
• Writing groups/workshops
Resources on Writing


Resources on Presenting Qualitative Results


Resources on Presenting Quantitative Results
