



The Research Square and Researcher Academic Writing & Publishing Bootcamp

#7: Common English mistakes: Part 1 “Fantastic mistakes and how to find them”

1.2. Writing an academic paper

Writing the paper

Different parts of your paper: Insights
Basic errors in English

Are you getting tired of this slide yet?

- ▶ Title
- ▶ Authors
- ▶ Abstract
- ▶ Keywords

Make them easy for indexing and searching!
(informative, attractive, effective)

- Main text (IMRAD)
- ▶ Introduction
 - ▶ **M**ethods
 - ▶ **R**esults
 - ▶ **A**nd
 - ▶ **D**iscussion (Conclusions)

Each has a distinct function.

- ▶ Acknowledgements
- ▶ References
- ▶ Supplementary materials

The IMRAD structure
Average length: 5,000-6,000 words
Introduction: ca. 1,500 words



Different sections: What about word counts?

Titles: 7 words or less

Abstract: 200-250 words

Introduction: 1,500 words

Methods: 2,000 words

Results: 1,000 words



Different sections: Key messages

Titles: Ask a question? Punctuate

Abstract: Four why questions

Introduction: Your question; State-of-the-art; This paper does ...

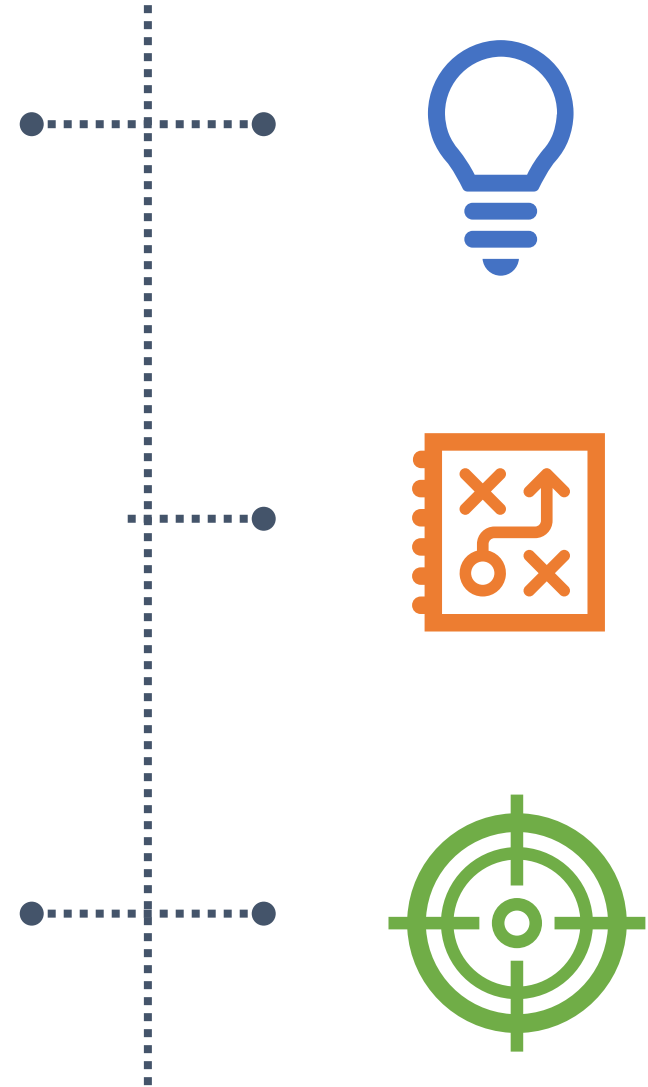
Methods: A timeline for your work

Results: Pictures rather than words



Common mistakes for scientific writing: Introduction

1. Be concise: no one wants to read excessively long studies
 - 👎 Long, non-objective text
 - 👍 Limit the word count to about 10% of the total number of words in the manuscript
2. Lack of coherence
 - 👎 Unclear rationale
 - 👍 Present your ideas in an organized way
3. Write in the present tense
 - 👍 The aim of this paper is to ...
 - 👍 Previous work in this area shows that ...



Common mistakes for scientific writing: Introduction

Use the name of authors when using references to other studies in the text, especially, as the subject of sentences

💡 *Hood et al. analyzed the 80 associations between macular structure and the 10-2 VF in eyes with 24-2 VFs that are normal outside the central 10 degrees, and segmented the 10-2 VF into more and less vulnerable zones.*

👉 In one study, 80 association were assessed to highlight the differences between (Hood et al.)

Different writing styles highlight different aspects. While in the first example, the main element of the sentence is the author, in the second, the information provided gains prominence.



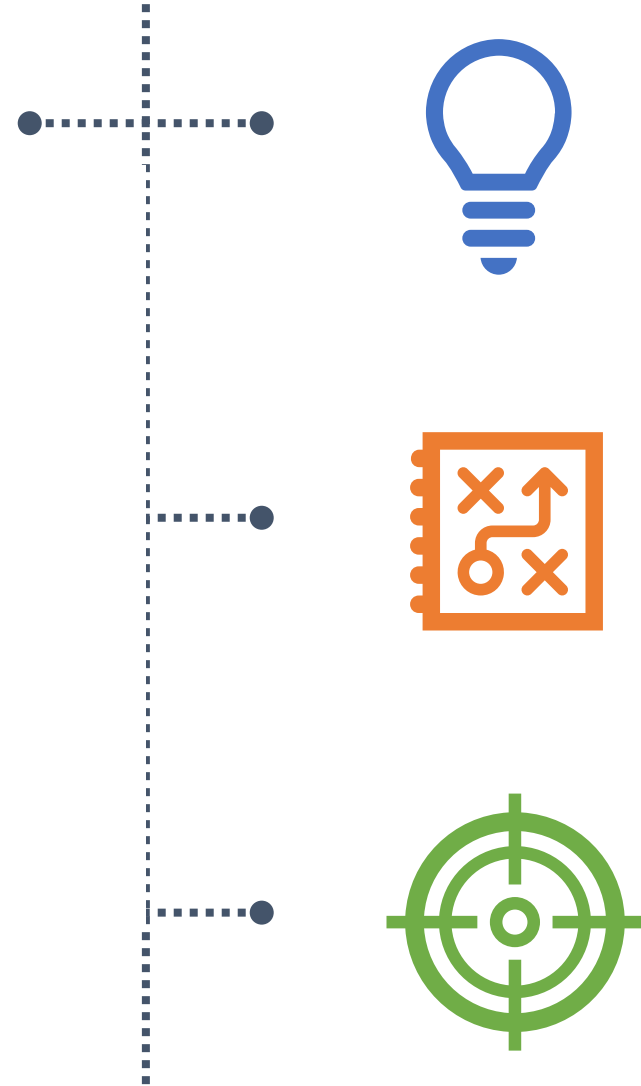
Common mistakes for scientific writing: Methods

Write this section in the past tense as a TIMELINE

- 💡 Present or future tense
- 👍 The methods refer to what has been done, not to something that will be or is currently being carried out.

Don't forget to include IRB approval

- 💡 Lack of approval by an institutional review board (IRB) or ethics in research committee
- 👍 Include in the first paragraph the information that IRB approval was been obtained
- 👍 Has to be prospective (before you start)



Common mistakes for scientific writing: Methods

Include all the materials used, as well as information about manufacturers (using a consistent style)

- 🔗 Incomplete data
- 🔗 The materials are described in a way that makes the manuscript read as an advertisement
- 👍 Describe all methods thoroughly
- 👍 Use writing styles that distance authors from endorsing techniques or materials used

Include a detailed description of the statistical analysis

- 🔗 Not to include a detailed description of statistical methods
- 👍 Describe the statistical analysis thoroughly
- 👍 Ask an external reviewer to read the MM section



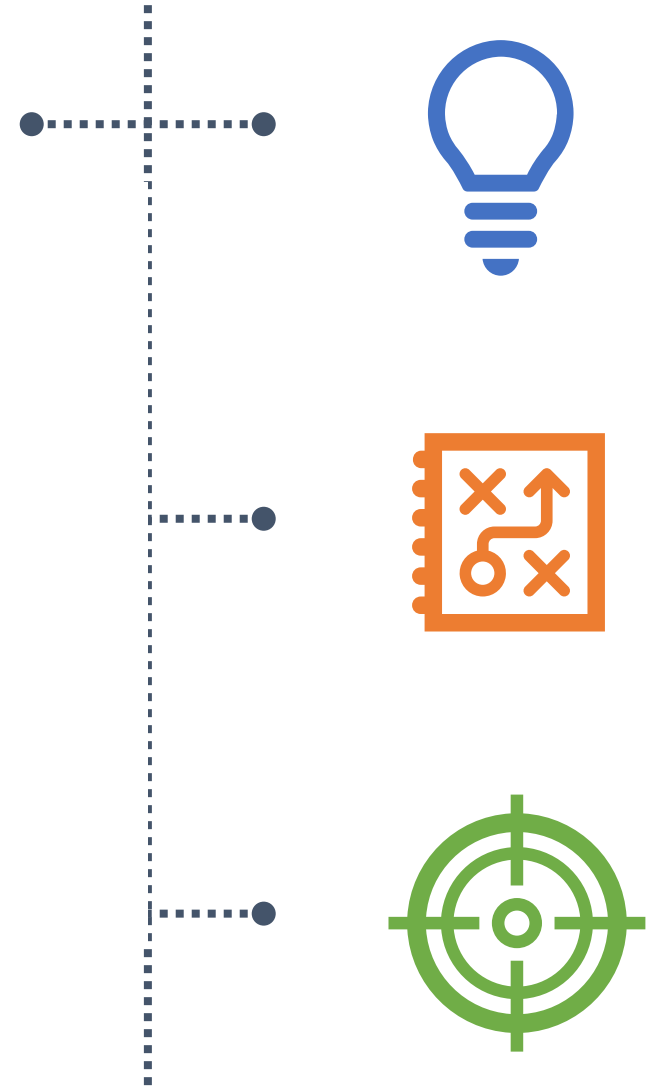
Common mistakes for scientific writing: Results

Too concise or verbose

- 💡 Summarize findings insufficiently and then only refer to tables and graphs
- 💡 Verbose and show data in tables and graphs that repeat what has been described in the text
- 👍 Write about the most important points in the text and

then

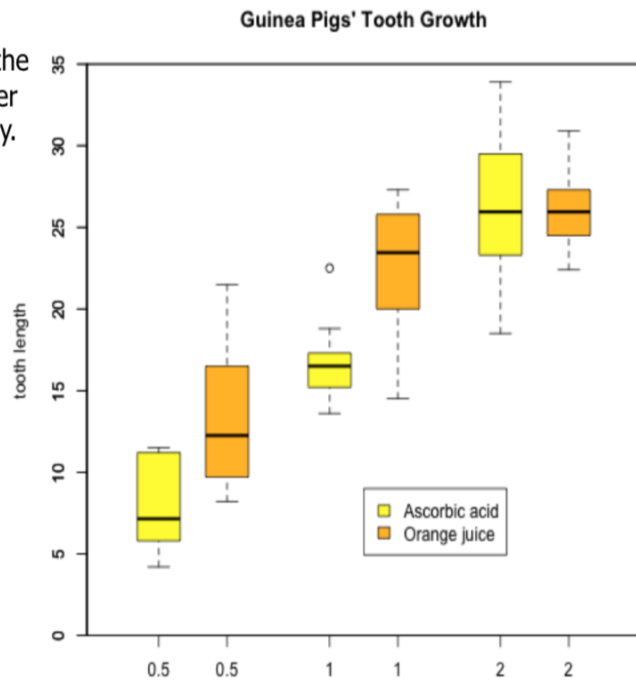
- 👍 Refer to graphs and tables that show findings in details
- 👍 Pictures rather than words



Common mistakes for scientific writing: Results

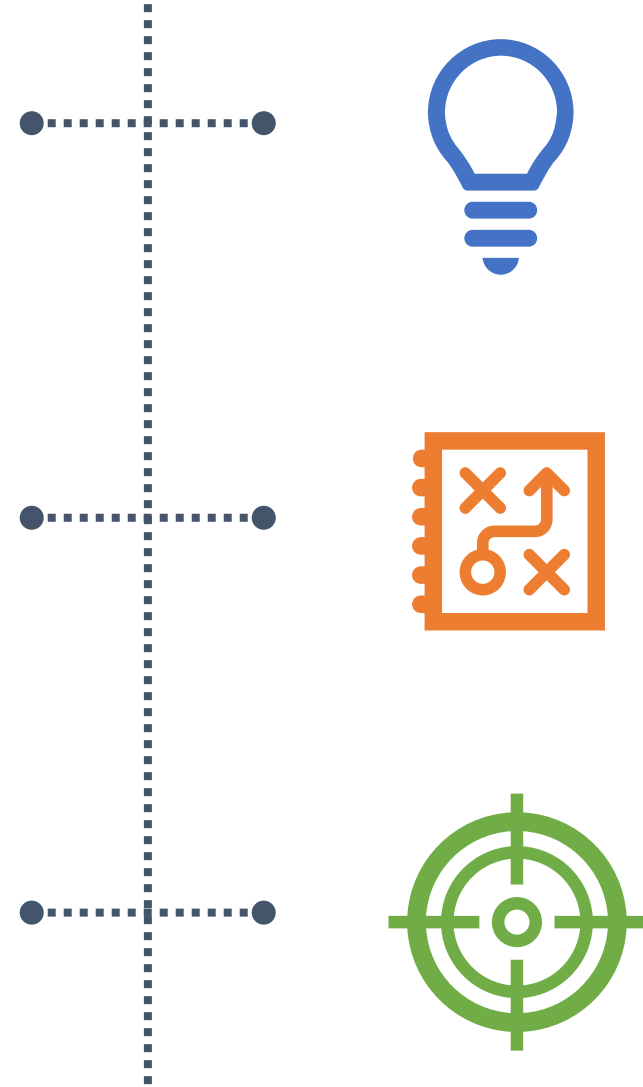
Box and whisker plot

It uses the 5-number summary.

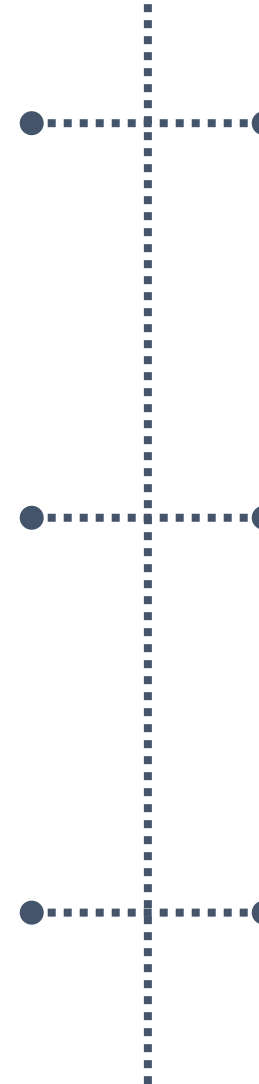
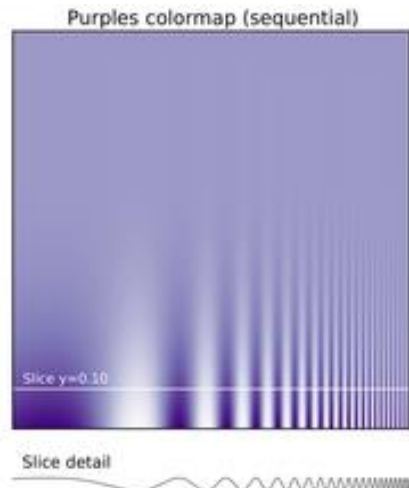
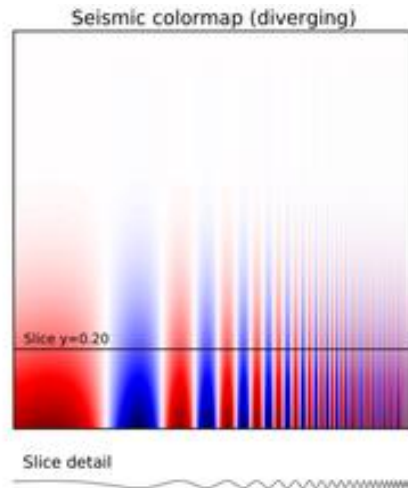
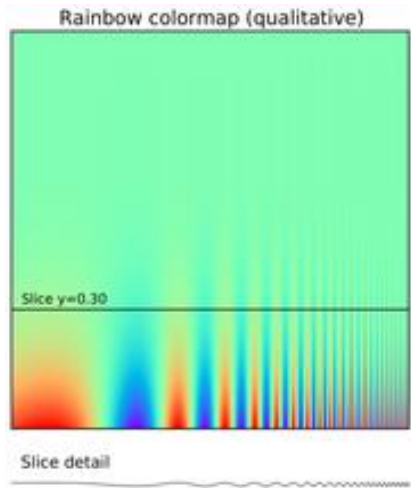


Poor quality of illustrations

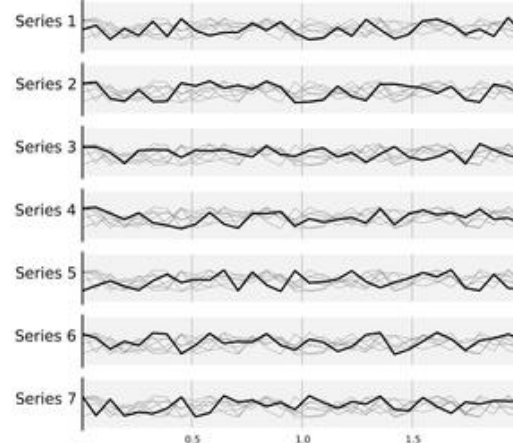
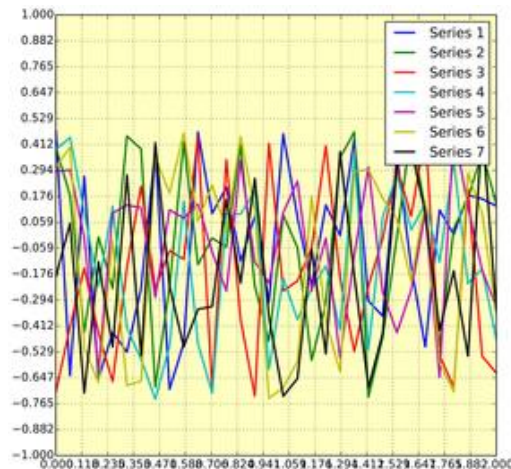
- 💡 Poor quality of illustrations in general
- 👉 Include professional quality illustrations



Common mistakes for scientific writing: Results



Use colour effectively



Don't confuse

Common mistakes for scientific writing: Conclusions

- Not all the objectives listed in the beginning of the study are addressed
- Not clearly answering the question that your study aims to address
- Confusing the reader: What's the answer?
- Present tense

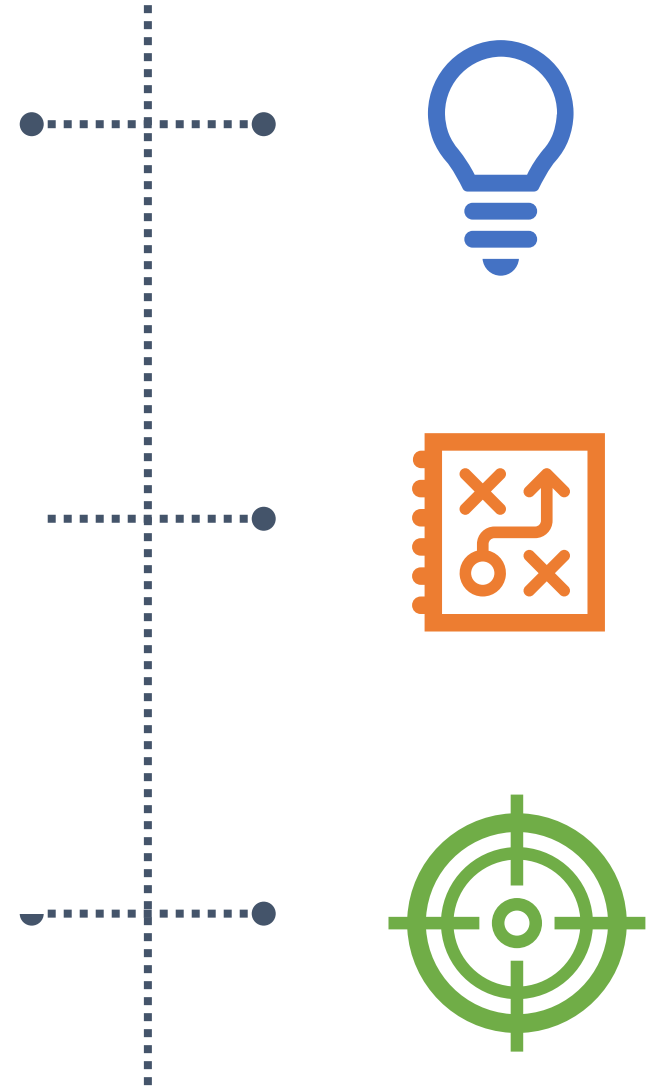


Common mistakes for scientific writing: Plagiarism

Self-plagiarism

- 💡 Use a dataset from a previous study (published or not) without making the reader aware of this.
- 💡 Submit a manuscript for publication containing data, conclusions or passages that have already been published (without citing your previous publication).
- 💡 Publishing multiple similar papers about the same study in different journals.

In short, self-plagiarism is any attempt to take any of your own previously published text, papers, or research results and make it appear brand new.

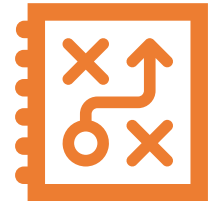
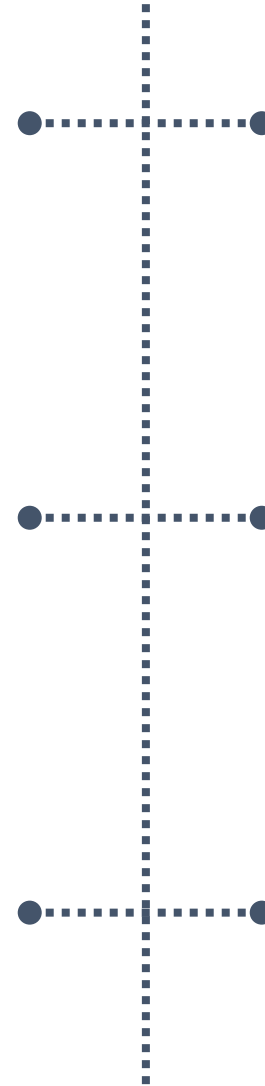


Effective English: Cultural variations

English speakers are generally reserved.
Sentences are often short and simple.

Long, flowing paragraphs with never-ending
adjectives and countless commas are
frowned upon in most kinds of writing.

I LOVE
ENGLISH



1.2. Writing an academic paper

Writing the paper

Different parts of your paper: Insights
Basic errors in English