

Writing for Scientists course

Course outline Alisdair Mclean

The course is aimed at researchers in the life sciences and medicine who are experiencing hesitancy and other perceived difficulties in writing up their research. The teacher is trained as natural scientist and will approach the subject as an essential part of the scientific process.

Objectives

Dealing with perceived and actual writing problems. Reduce hesitancy, increase writing and preparation speed, increase awareness of the **internal structure** of scientific research texts.

Target participants

Those currently attempting to write: at post-Doctoral and PhD levels. Writing Dissertations, Scientific papers and posters in the life sciences and medicine

Materials

My materials (approximately 200 pages, sent by e-mail attachment) and participant's materials brought with them.

Exercises/assignments based on exercises given by the teacher or parallel exercises relevant to the course participant's field of study/research using his/her own or subject related materials

Outline and scope of course Reducing hesitancy and thus increasing speed. Techniques writing process Vocabulary relevant grammar revision (Syntax, verbs Nouns Pronouns) and Punctuation.

All references to structure cover both scientific papers and dissertations.

Week 1

Difficulties and perceived difficulties for writers.

Structure (1) Abstracts (The second-most difficult section to write: Why?)

Review of grammar: Syntax of English sentences

Reminder select several papers from participants respective research fields and that are relevant to ongoing studies (but which the participant had no part in the research or preparation of the text) print them out and bring them along.

Make a template for your own abstract. / Write an abstract describing the demonstration given.

Week 2

Structure (2) Posters (briefly)

Structure (3) Materials and Methods (the easiest section)

Structure (4) Results (the second easiest section to write)

Author guidelines/instructions their importance and how to comply and why.

Use own materials to scrutinise methods

Vocabulary Confusing words 1

Grammar Verbs

Punctuation correct use of commas and full-stops

Week 3

Author guidelines/instructions

Structure (5) Discussion (part 1)

**Why are discussions considered the most difficult section to write?
problems: What to write and where to write it?**

Sequence structuring technique

Reporting sentences

Prepare a **content draft** written in simple sentences

How does the reporting of results in the Discussion differ from how they were reported in the results section?

Use own materials to answer the question.

Vocabulary Confusing words 2

Grammar Verbs 2

Punctuation continued

Week 4

Structure (6) Discussions (part 2)

Discussion Techniques (dealing with difficult or unexpected results)

Complex sentences (different types of adverbial clauses) Grammar and vocabulary relevant to published research texts.

Prepare a first draft of a discussion by using longer sentences when needed.

Punctuation Apostrophes, Brackets, Colons and semi-colons: their use and misuse

Difficult sentences exercise

Vocabulary Confusing words 3

Week 5

A review of discussions Content draft and first draft

Evaluation of sequence structuring.

Structure (7) Introductions techniques

Vocabulary

Getting a text to flow using sentence connectors, transitionals and pronouns

Week 6

Vocabulary Confusing words

Round up and summary of major points including techniques

Structure (8) Citing references

The usual errors and associated problems

Vancouver versus Harvard systems

Exponent numbers

Punctuation in greater detail Hyphens Capitalisation Quotations

Week 7

Structure (9) Ordinance transfer report writing

Upgrading a Masters to a PhD

Applying for a research grant / Stipend /post-Doc

Round up of the course.

What did you learn?

Any questions

Feedback on the course

This outline is subject to amendment according to participants needs.