Preparing a Paper for Publication

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Most scientists regarded the new streamlined peer-review process as ‘quite an improvement.’
1. Proper quotation and citation to avoid plagiarism

*Presented by: Jacquie Elkouz, Assistant Director, UNLV Writing Center*

2. Developing good flow of thought

3. Formatting the paper according to journal or conference style
   - Basic formatting
   - Tables and Figures
   - In-text citations and references

4. If there is time, we will work on issues that you request
1. Developing a good flow of thought
2. Developing good sentences and paragraphs
For a Research Disclosure:

I. Introduction
II. Background information
III. Materials and Experiment Setup
IV. Data
V. Results and Discussion
VI. Conclusion
For Literature Review

I. Introduction

II. Literature Review

III. Evaluation of Literature Review

IV. Conclusion, including recommendations for future research
Introduction

- State what the problem is
- What you plan to research to solve the problem
- When to write this section:
  - For a paper, write it LAST
  - For a thesis or dissertation
    - Write a draft intro to present to your advisor and committee before you start your thesis or dissertation
    - You MUST revise this intro after you have written the rest of your thesis or dissertation, as you have new ideas and thoughts to contribute
Background

- Usually a literature review
- Make it comprehensive but not overwhelming
- Pay careful attention to the in-text citations
- Be very careful not to plagiarize, not even unintentionally
These two sections are the heart of your paper

- Materials and Experimental Setup
- Data from your experiment

Spend most of your time working on these sections.
Materials and Experimental Setup

- You are so close to the experiment, that sometimes you might assume the reader knows what you know.
- \textbf{NEVER} assume that the reader knows anything about your research.
Data from your experiment

- Create your graphs and tables thoughtfully.
- Use photos when they help your reader understand your research – **BUT** make sure if they are not your photos, you give the proper credit or obtain copyright permission.
- You might want to look at the style guide of the journal for specific instructions on how they want the graphics to be set up – this might save you time.
Results and Discussion

• A difficult section to write
• Don’t add new background information here
• Don’t just repeat everything you already said here
• For results: use text, graphs, and tables to present your results
• For discussion: readers want to know what you conclude the result data implies

Sometimes journals ask that you separate Results and Discussion into two separate sections.
Conclusion

- Summarizes the problem, your experiment, the results
- Explains and/or justifies the conclusions you have arrived at with regard to your research
- Points out areas for improvement in future research
- Recommends further research avenues
Introduction

- The time to write your intro is after you wrote the main information.
- After this, you:
  - Write your abstract
  - Develop a good title
Developing good sentences and paragraphs

• Engineers LOVE to create complex and lengthy sentences.
• Engineers LOVE to create lengthy paragraphs
• These are very difficult to read.
• One thought, one sentence.
• One basic thought flow, one paragraph.
Now it is your turn!

• Develop good thought flow by creating an outline.
• Create easy-to-follow sentences and paragraphs.
• Take any topic we just discussed and modify your paper accordingly.
• I will come by to help you.
• You will have about 20 minutes to work on your paper.
You **must** check the style guidelines of the journal or conference paper.

- This is the first thing that the editors of the journal or conference will check – and reject if you don’t comply.

- Suggested strategy:
  - Find out and understand the style before you start writing your paper.
  - Write your paper freely; don’t be overly concerned about the style.
  - Once you have written and edited your paper, then format it according to style guidelines.

- Also, create your own ‘style sheet’ to keep track of phrases and terms you use.
Pay special attention to:

- How the journal wants you to format your paper
- Headings and Subheadings
- Captions for Figures
- Table Titles
- In-text citations and References

Every journal and conference has some kind of style guide they want you to follow.

**The style guide includes:**
- Font type and size
- Double space, single space, etc.
- The way headers should look
- Indent or spaced paragraphs
- Abstract word count
- Keywords? Highlights?
- Page length of paper
- How to submit artwork and tables
Many style guides are incomplete.

- For instance, they may not tell you how to format your figure captions or table titles.

- Look at a couple of recent published articles in that journal to find out missing style information.

- Don’t hesitate to call or email an editor of that journal or conference to find out style information. Usually, they would be happy to help you.

Ignore style guides at your peril.
You **must** follow the journal style for your references.

- This is an extremely annoying detail, but every bit as important as correct mathematics in your paper.

- **Either:**
  - Format your references and in-text citations by hand **OR**
  - Use RefWorks -- free to UNLV students, faculty, staff, and alumni.
APA 6th edition style for a journal article -- the basis for most Elsevier journals.

- Reference


  References are listed alphabetically in APA style.

- In-text citation

  - (Author & Author, 2011)
  - According to Author and Author (2011)
  - You MUST name all authors or use Author, et al., depending on your journal style guide
Now it is your turn!

- Find the style guide on the web for your paper.
- If you brought a thesis, I will help you find that style guide.
- Study the style guide and begin to format your paper accordingly.
- Format your in-text citations and references according to your journal’s style guide.

I will come by to help you.
• Julie Longo, College of Engineering Technical Writer julie.longo@unlv.edu
• Sue Wainscott, UNLV Librarian for UNLV’s College of Engineering sue.wainscott@unlv.edu
• UNLV’s Writing Center http://writingcenter.unlv.edu/
  – Individualized assistance
  – Workshops recommended for Engineers
tt http://writingcenter.unlv.edu/wkshops/classes.html
    • Grammar Refresher I & II
    • Mastering the APA Style
    • Top Ten Grammar Mistakes and How to Avoid Them
    • Punctuation
• UNLV Thesis and Dissertation Style Guide
• Purdue’ Online Writing Lab (OWL) http://owl.english.purdue.edu/
• Identify great scientific writers (current and historical) and study their writing styles