

Scientific Writing Style

OUTLINE AND EXPLANATION

Scientific writing can be a little different from other forms of literature. Here are the main things to remember when producing scientific writing!

1. Aim for brevity. Using longer sentences can make introducing scientific concepts seem more confusing. Try to break up information using sentences; one new idea per sentence.
2. Always use the active voice rather than the passive voice, when possible.
 - a. Active voice: “Neil Armstrong walked on the moon.”
 - b. Passive voice: “The moon was walked on by Neil Armstrong.”
3. Use the present tense for generalizations (“the mitochondria IS the powerhouse of the cell”). These are things that do not change over time and are constant.
4. Use the past tense for describing previous literature, or even the findings of your own study (“we found”....”the study showed”)
5. Beware of mixing up scientific jargon
 - a. Do not use words like “confound” or “extraneous” when not referring to a confounding or extraneous variable
 - b. Do not use former and latter. Instead, indicate which statement you are referring to by name.