

Research Writing Workshop

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Part 3

Advice and Warnings

Necessity

An author is a necessary actor who *should* write in the first person:

- 1.

To narrate events that her or she has witnessed,

2.

To narrate personal experience,

3.

To take responsibility for findings and results, or

4.

To state an educated or professional opinion.

Don'ts

An author should not enter the narrative without good reason.

An author should not narrate personal involvement unless he or she is a necessary actor.

Don't

Do not complain about the difficulty of a research project. State the challenges and problems, then stop. *Never* emphasize the work of writing with such phrases as “I asked myself,” or “To prepare, I read many books and articles.”

Don't

Don't use clichés.

Don't use stock phrases.

Don't

Don't use jargon. Use clear terms in common language.

If you must use a technical term, explain it in common language or define it.

Don't

Don't use professional, technical, or scientific terms that you cannot explain or define.

Don't

Don't use fancy words in an attempt to seem scholarly or scientific. If an author does not understand a word, it is likely that the reader won't understand it, either.

Warning!

If an author misuses a word that he or she does not understand when the reader does understand it, the reader may think of the author as a fraud.

Advice from my Grandmother

Start early.

Read and write.

Polish.

Get advice.

Advice from my Publisher

Make a schedule.

Keep to the schedule.

Rhetoric

Develop rhetoric carefully and systemically.

Ensure continuity.

State the promise of the paper and keep the promise.

Development

Define terms.

State assumptions.

Explain, clarify, and limit them.

Develop the paper with a sense of narrative dramaturgy.

Do

Clarify issues.

Explain key issues.

Answer what, why, how, and when.

Use appropriate forms of demonstration: narrative, testimony, evidence, and models.

Do

Present and address
contrary evidence.

Do

Work carefully with tense, time, and narrative sequence.

Pay careful attention to process.

Make every process description clear.

Do

Use active verbs.

Establish agency.

Represent time flow.

Be clear.

Start writing!

What to do and
how to do it.

A robust manuscript should meet several criteria. These criteria vary by discipline, field, and method. Use this checklist as a basic frame.

Adjust the checklist to suit the discipline, journal, book, or conference. Book chapters may be significantly different while meeting comparable requirements.

The author should:

1. State the theme of the paper.
2. Introduce the subject.
3. Promise a contribution.
4. State the goals of the paper.

5. Identify the issues of the paper.
6. Give appropriate background information.
7. Describe the approach and method.
8. Describe the circumstances in which he or she did the work.

9. Describe the research process.
10. State the structure of the argument and state how the paper will develop it.
11. Provide evidence for the argument.

12. Show how the evidence and the argument lead to a contribution.

Evidence may include empirical work and material from the literature of the field.

13. Describe the findings or conclusions and how they fulfill the goals of the paper.
14. State what the author learned or accomplished.
15. Suggest future work.
16. Provide a reference list containing all sources cited in the text.

Writing is a window!

Effective scholarly or scientific writing enables to reader to see what the author sees, to understand what the author knows, and to make a reasoned judgment on the author's conclusions.

Publishing History

This presentation contains subject headers, rubrics, and selected contents of the Research Writing Workshop.

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