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Writing scientific papers in English. An ELSE-Ciba Foundation guide for authors.

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Author Affiliation : Associated Scientific Publishers, P.O. Box 211, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Book : [Writing scientific papers in English. An ELSE-Ciba Foundation guide for authors](#)
pp.vii + 108 pp.

Abstract : It is all dogmatic and good. An author who composes and writes these lines will produce a clear and logical contribution to his subject. The detailed suggestions are comprehensive, and I like the suggestion that if several people collaborated in the work, only one should do the writing. This would give it a

flavour and style which might be diluted if too many people took a hand-too
There are sections on planning, preparing, first draft, revising, refining and
of typing. There are also 5 useful appendices: steps in writing a paper, units
measurement and their abbreviations, general abbreviations and symbols,
in biochemistry and taxonomy, and expressions to avoid. This last is idiosyncrasy
should be taken to heart and used with discretion; 1 particularly like the con
the word " following " (so beloved by the BBC) when " after " is meant. The
much other good advice, but I never saw the sense in the rule that a sentence
begin with a figure, or that all numbers up to 9 should be written out in the
advice to use the first person-" I (or we) did this or that", instead of the dre
this or that was done ", which is mock modesty and should be anathema.
The book seems to be aimed principally at laboratory workers who do exper
workers and others who gather facts and draw conclusions may need to pla
but could still benefit from it. There is, however, a certain lack of sparkle; it p
correct, but like correct women in fiction, is rather plain. The best scientific v
the imagination, and reading it is a stimulation. The authors hint at this, but
I should like, possibly because they realize that style cannot be taught, but t
stressed its importance more-readability is a high virtue, and is probably the
too much scrutiny by too many people.

The authors seem to regard editors as wise men who know what's what, b
editor, I know that editors are very human. I was quite prepared to alter oth
writing (without altering their meaning, I hope), but I resented an editor doir
for a paper of mine; it is a delicate business, and editorial interference tend
spontaneity. T like to read scientific papers, but too often I find them an inte
struggle rather than an enjoyable stretching of the mind. Condensation can
The essence is in the style.

Though this book should be in every science library, alongside Fowler, Gow
rest, 1 wonder how many authors study the art of writing? They should. *Ch*

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Identifier(s) : systematics

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