However, editors, reviewers, and the research community don’t consider these reasons when assessing your work.
The process of writing – building the article

Title, Abstract, and Keywords

Conclusion

Introduction

Methods

Results

Discussion

Figures/Tables (your data)
General structure of a research article

- Title
- Abstract
- Keywords
- Introduction
- Methods
- Results and Discussion
- Conclusion
- Acknowledgements
- References
- Supporting materials
Preparing your article

Writing your article

- Spend time on abstract and conclusion & references
- Sharing research data
- Use easy to understand charts and professional illustrations
- Use clear and correct manuscript language
Effective manuscript titles

- Attract reader’s attention
- Contain fewest possible words
- Adequately describe content
- Are informative but concise
- Identify main issue
- Do not use technical jargon and rarely-used abbreviations

Editors and reviewers do not like titles that make no sense or fail to represent the subject matter adequately. Additionally, if the title is not accurate, the appropriate audience may not read your paper.
Introduction

Provide a brief context to the readers

Address the problem

Identify the solutions and limitations

Identify what the work is trying to achieve

Provide a perspective consistent with the nature of the journal

Write a unique introduction for every article. DO NOT reuse introductions.
Methods

• Describe how the problem was studied
• Include detailed information
• Do not describe previously published procedures
• Identify the equipment and materials used
Methods – ethics committee approval

- Experiments on humans or animals must follow applicable ethics standards
- Approval of the local ethics committee is required and should be specified in the manuscript, covering letter, or the online submission system
- Editors can make their own decisions on ethics
Results

Include only data of primary importance
Use sub-headings to keep results of the same type together
Be clear and easy to understand
Highlight the main findings
Feature unexpected findings
Provide statistical analysis
Include illustrations and figures
Discussion

• Interpretation of results

• Most important section

• Make the discussion correspond to the results and complement them

• Compare published results with your own

Be careful not to use the following:
- Statements that go beyond what the results can support
- Non-specific expressions
- New terms not already defined or mentioned in your paper
- Speculations on possible interpretations based on imagination
Conclusion

- Be clear
- Provide justification for the work
- Explain how your work advances the present state of knowledge
- Suggest future experiments
Acknowledgments

- Advisors
- Financial supporters and funders
- Proof readers and typists
- Suppliers who may have donated materials
References

- Do not use too many references
- Always ensure you have fully absorbed the material you are referencing
- Avoid excessive self citations
- Avoid excessive citations of publications from the same region or institute
- Conform strictly to the style given in the Guide for Authors
Help with your article

Writing an article is hard work – finding and sorting research, preparing references, sourcing feedback…

You can get help from Mendeley (www.mendeley.com), a free reference manager and academic social network.

The Mendeley Reference Manager generates citations and bibliographies in Word, OpenOffice, and LaTeX.

You can also use Mendeley to connect with colleagues and securely share papers, notes and annotations.

Or use Mendeley’s social network to identify potential collaborators.
Why is language important?

Save your editor and reviewers the trouble of guessing what you mean

Complaint from an editor:
“[This] paper fell well below my threshold. I refuse to spend time trying to understand what the author is trying to say. Besides, I really want to send a message that they can't submit garbage to us and expect us to fix it. My rule of thumb is that if there are more than 6 grammatical errors in the abstract, then I don't waste my time carefully reading the rest.”
Do publishers correct language?

No!

It is the author’s responsibility...

Visit [http://webshop.elsevier.com](http://webshop.elsevier.com) for translation and language editing services.
**Manuscript language: Sentences**

- Write direct, short, and factual sentences
- Convey one piece of information per sentence
- Avoid multiple statements in one sentence

The average length of sentences in scientific writing is only about 12-17 words.
Manuscript Language – Tenses

• Present tense for known facts and hypotheses:
  “The average life of a honey bee is 6 weeks”

• Past tense for experiments you have conducted:
  “All the honey bees were maintained in an environment with a consistent temperature of 23 degrees centigrade…”

• Past tense when you describe the results of an experiment:
  “The average life span of bees in our contained environment was 8 weeks…”
Manuscript Language – Grammar

• Use active voice to shorten sentences
  ▪ Passive voice: “It has been found that there had been…”
  ▪ Active voice: “We found that…”
  ▪ Passive voice: “carbon dioxide was consumed by the plant…”
  ▪ Active voice: “…the plant consumed carbon dioxide..”

• Avoid abbreviations: “it’s”, “weren’t”, “hasn’t”
  ▪ Never use them in scientific writing
  ▪ Only use abbreviations for units of measure or established scientific abbreviations, e.g. DNA