

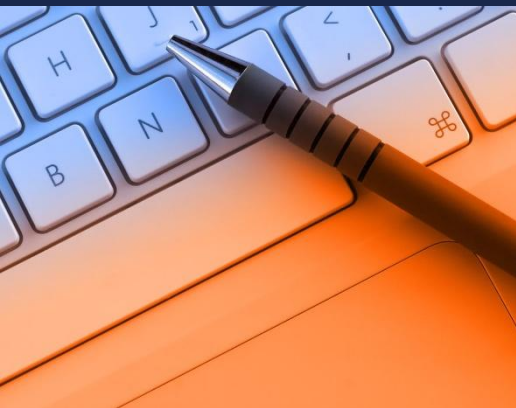


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## **Perspectives on Research Publication in English-Language Journals**

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## How get a paper published: Main principles

- Start with a good idea
- Create logical a research design
- Present your work clearly
- Write competently
- Follow journal requirements
- Work with the publication process

Where  
professional  
editing can  
help

*Start with  
a good idea*

# Start with a good idea

## A good idea is important

- *Historical importance* – research topic seen as important over many years, but still not completely settled
- *Theoretical importance* – research tests some theoretical proposition, especially if the test can falsify the theory
- *Practical importance* – research helps solve some significant practical problem

# Start with a good idea

## A good idea is original

- Advances theory (maybe falsifies it)
- Fills an empirical gap
- Introduces new methodology



***Plagiarism is NOT originality !!!***

***Plagiarism*** means presenting another author's work as your own

**ABSOLUTE RULE:**  
***NEVER, NEVER, EVER PLAGIARIZE!!***

# Start with a good idea

A good idea is **SuRpRiSing!!**

Surprising results...

- Are counter-intuitive, unexpected
- Give new perspectives on old ideas
- Challenge common wisdom
- Falsify theory
- Demonstrate unexpected constraints



## *Create logical research designs*



## Logical design shows logical hypothesis development

- Logical connections to theory
- Logical demonstration of a gap to be filled
- Logical statement forms:
  - “if...then”
  - “because...therefore”
- Logical connections of research question to hypotheses

## Logical designs show logical operationalizations

- Operationalization:  
Defining abstract constructs as concrete, measurable variables
- Arguments support
  - Logical operationalizations of IVs
  - Logical operationalizations of DVs
  - Logical connections to data collection procedures

## Logical designs use logical methods

- Logical participant sampling
  - Population sampled
  - Sampling methods
  - Sample sizes
- Logical apparatus, materials choices
- Logical research procedures

## ***Present your work clearly***

***To readers, clear presentation  
shows clear thinking***

## Clear presentations show clear structure and logical flow

- **Standard structure (IMRAD)**
  - Introduction
  - Methods
  - Results
  - And
  - Discussion
- **Clear logical flow...**
  - .. in research question development
  - ...from methods to research questions
  - ...from methods to results
  - ...from results to discussion

## Clear presentations show clear methods

- Adequate detail about...
  - Anything affecting data collection
    - ✓ Participants
    - ✓ Apparatus
    - ✓ Procedures
  - Anything special about data analysis

## *Write competently*

*To readers, poor writing may  
suggest poor thinking*

## Competent writing is correct writing

- **No** grammar errors
- **No** spelling errors
- **No** punctuation errors

*(more on this later...)*



## Competent writing is clear writing

- Clear writing shows clear organization
- Clear writing tends to use...
  - short sentences
  - short paragraphs
- Clear writing avoids unnecessary jargon
- Clear writing is economical (avoids wordiness)

## Competent writing is precise writing

- Precise writing...
  - defines terms
  - limits abbreviation use
- Precise writing
  - provides explicit arguments
  - gives explicit explanations
  - avoids ambiguous wording

## *Follow journal requirements*

*Editors and reviewers expect this and it is totally under your control!*

## Follow journal requirements for:

- **Content**
  - Topics
  - Research scope
  - Article type (empirical, review, etc.)
- **Length**
  - Title
  - Abstract
  - Entire manuscript

# Follow journal requirements

## Follow journal requirements for:

- **Format**
  - Margins, paragraph indentations, line spacing
  - Fonts
  - Headings
- **Style**
  - Text reference citations
  - Reference list
  - Lots of others: check the journal website

**Following journal requirements improves acceptance probability**

# Follow journal requirements

Editors **reject** manuscripts solely for defects in...

- **Content**
  - Inappropriate for the journal
  - Scope too limited
- **Length, format, and style**
  - Manuscript too long
  - Not conforming to standard style manuals
  - Not conforming to specific journal style requirements
- **Language**
  - Unclear writing
  - Language errors – grammar, spelling, punctuation, etc.
  - **Don't rely on spelling, grammar checkers to catch errors!!**

# Follow journal requirements

***Example:***

***A statement from Elsevier, a major journal publisher***

Editors evaluate all manuscripts first. Manuscripts rejected at this stage are either insufficiently original, or have scientific flaws, poor grammar/English language, or are outside the aims and scope of the journal. **Failure to follow the Guide for Authors and the article structure will result in the manuscript being returned to the author.**

***This is called a **desk rejection** –  
a rejection without review***

# Follow journal requirements

## Example of an actual **desk rejection**:

“Although the topic of your paper might be of interest to readers there are a number of issues that need to be addressed in the manuscript **before I can even send it out for review** so I am **unable to consider your manuscript** for publication.

“The quality of writing of this paper is well below the standards accepted in <our journal>. At times I found it difficult to understand your logic which makes it especially difficult to evaluate the empirical merit and contribution of your paper .... I also found misspelled words, oddly worded subheadings..., and other formatting issues that do not appear to be language-based errors.”



# Follow journal requirements

## Example of an actual **desk rejection**:

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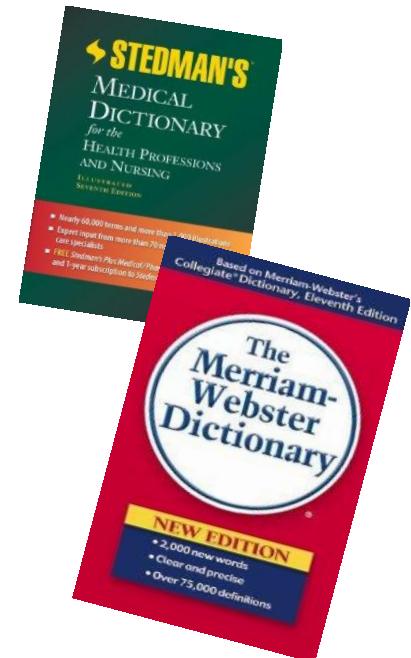
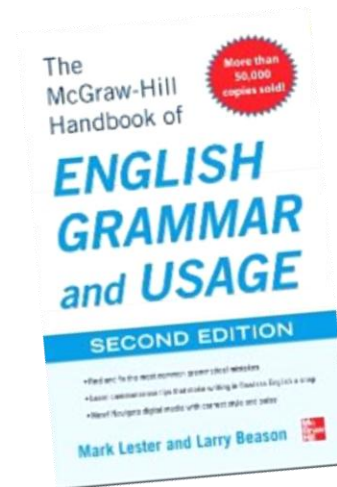
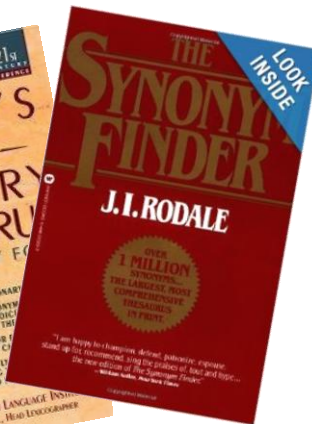
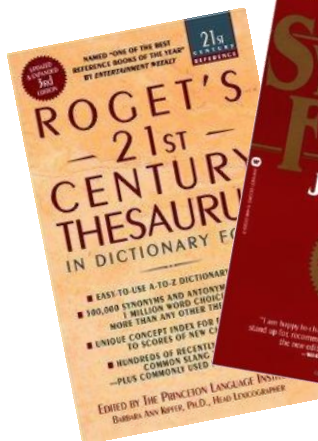
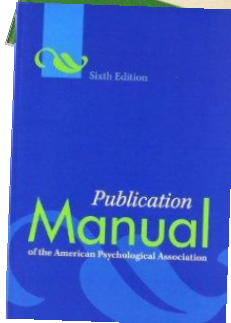
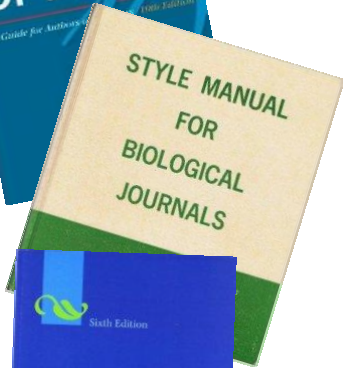
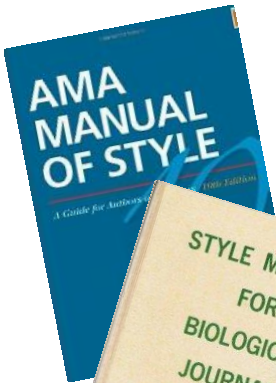
“The **quality of writing** of this paper is well below the standards accepted in <our journal>. At times I found it **difficult to understand your logic** which makes it especially difficult to evaluate the empirical merit and contribution of your paper ... I also found **misspelled words, oddly worded subheadings**..., and other **formatting issues** that do not appear to be language-based errors.”

# ***Writing a research manuscript***

# Writing your manuscript

## Gather your writing tools

- Target journal guidelines, recent articles
- Disciplinary style manual (e.g., APA, AMA, ICMJE)
- Dictionaries (standard, specialized)
- Thesaurus, synonym finder
- General grammar and usage guides



## Plan ahead

- **Plan content: Make an outline**
  - Logical development of the *Introduction*
  - Elements of the *Methods*
  - Structure the *Results* section
  - Organization of the *Discussion*
- **Plan supplements: Tables and figures**
  - What to put in them
  - How to construct them
- **Plan documentation: Gather needed references**

## Title

- *The title is the first filter readers use to decide whether to read a paper*
- Aim for
  - Clarity
  - Informativeness
  - Brevity (typically, 12 – 15 words)
- A generic title:  
*The effect of variable X on variable Y, under conditions  $C_1 \dots C_n$ , for population P*

## Title examples

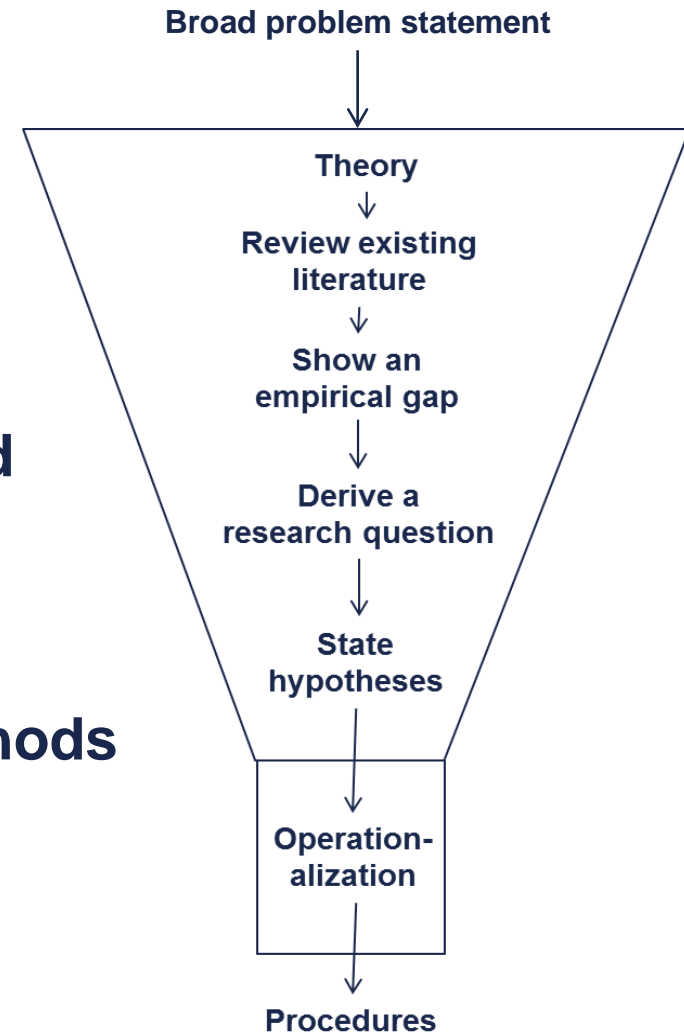
Weaker title...	Stronger title...
On the generality of the laws of learning	Preparedness: Evolutionary biases on stimuli, rewards, and conditions for learning
P'	Structure of the Earth's inner core from seismic P' wave reflections
Rapid detection of X gene in <i>Pseudomoas aeruginosa</i> using Y method	Rapid identification of antibiotic-resistant <i>Pseudomonas aeruginosa</i> strains by Y-mediated detection of X
Haptic distance-to-break in the presence of friction	Haptic perceptual learning effects on prediction of simulated laparoscopic tissue breakage with varying resistance and friction

## Abstract

- *The abstract is the second filter readers use to decide whether to read a paper*
- Objective: To amplify title
- Use the same flow as the paper itself
- Avoid...
  - Excessive detail (example: statistics)
  - Undefined abbreviations
  - Literature citations
- Length: Stay within journal word limits (typically, about 150 – 250 words)

## Introduction

- Use the **funnel plan**  
(Flow: broad to specific elements)
  - Emphasize connections to theory
  - Review relevant literature
  - Define an empirical gap to be filled
  - State a clear research question
  - Derive testable hypotheses
  - Operationalize hypotheses in Methods (apparatus, procedures)





## Introduction

- Focus: Logical development of research questions
- “If...then” statements show logical flow
- Clearly state hypotheses
- Emphasize novelty, originality, and surprisingness

## Frequent *Introduction* problems

- Literature review issues
  - Review too shallow, too narrow
  - Uncritical inclusion of citations
    - ✓ Unclear relevance of literature cited
    - ✓ Unclear comparisons, contrasts between studies
  - Inadequate documentation of statements
  - No clear empirical gap identified
- Unclear logic in research question development
- No clear statement of a research question
- No clear hypothesis statement

## Methods

- Follow the standard flow: Participants, apparatus and materials, procedure
- Participants
  - Define the population and sampling methods
    - ✓ Recruitment methods
    - ✓ Assignment to test conditions
    - ✓ Any motivational considerations
  - Always confirm compliance with ethical standards
- Apparatus and Materials: Provide adequate detail
- Procedure: Provide adequate detail

***The Methods section should allow a reader to replicate the study***

## Frequent *Methods* section problems

- Too little detail about...
  - Populations, demographics, sampling methods
  - Apparatus, materials
  - Procedures
- Unsupported claims of random sampling
- Too little supporting information for measures (example: reliability measures for scales)
- Too much detail (example: statistical procedures)

## Results

- Put positive results first, negative results later
- Typical flow:
  - Descriptive statistics → hypothesis testing
  - Global tests → specific hypothesis tests
- Draw conclusions from statistical tests
- Show how statistics address hypotheses
- Follow journal style for statistical reporting
- Use figures, tables to report data efficiently

**Use the *Results* section to tell your story**

## Results

- State direction of differences

Typical: Condition A scores were **significantly different from** those for Condition B.

Better: Condition A scores were **significantly higher than** those for Condition B.

- Pair statistical outcomes and interpretations

Example: “Condition A was significantly higher than Condition B. **The difference was consistent with our hypothesis.**”

- Examine statistical outcomes critically

- Given the original data, do results make sense?
- “Marginally significant” outcomes are NOT significant
- Watch for possible Type I errors

## Frequent *Results* section problems

- Ignoring assumptions → inappropriate statistical tests
  - Levels of measurement
  - Data distributions
- Not pairing central tendency and variability measures – show both measures, not just central tendency
- Not using standard format for statistical results
  - Test used
  - Calculated statistical value, with degrees of freedom
  - Probability value
  - Effect size

## Discussion

- Often the most difficult section to write
- Use the *inverted funnel plan*
  - mirror image of the Introduction
  - more specific to broader issues
- Typical Discussion section flow
  - Summarize the findings
  - Emphasize any results that are surprising
  - Show how results fill the literature gap
  - Connect results to theory



## Discussion

- Anticipate reviewer objections and answer to them
- Turn limitations into suggestions for future research
  - ✓ **Limitations on results** → **New, expanded IVs or DVs**
  - ✓ **Limitations of methods** → **New test conditions**
  - ✓ **Limitations on generalizability** → **New populations**
  - ✓ **Limitations due to confounds** → **Tests of alternative explanations**
- Suggest possible practical applications

## Frequent *Discussion* section problems

- Lack of connection to the *Results* section
- Inserting findings not reported in *Results*
- Lack of connection to the *Introduction*
  - Existing literature
  - Theory
  - Broader problem statement
- Claiming more than the results support
- Ignoring alternative explanations

## References

- Document statements with relevant references
- Better to begin (not end) sentences with citations  
**Example:** Past work showed that...(Jones, 1984).  
**Better:** Jones (1984) showed that....
- Match text and reference list citations **exactly**
  - All text citations in the reference list
  - All reference list citations in the text
  - Names and dates in text match those in ref list

## Frequent *References* problems

- Unclear connection of citations to text statements

**Example:** Past studies showed that learning depends on motivation and practice (Jones, 1987; Smith, 2003).

(Did both authors show both effects? Did Jones show one thing and Smith the other? If so, which showed which?)

- Inconsistent reference formats, styles
  - In text citations
  - In the reference list
- Text citations and reference lists do not matching
- Incomplete references in the reference list
- Incorrect use of “et al.” in text citations, in reference list

## Figures and tables

- **Primary goal: Efficient presentation of information**
- **General points**
  - **Text vs. tables, graphs**
    - ✓ **Don't repeat data from tables, graphs in text**
    - ✓ **Don't repeat data from text in tables, graphs**
  - **Call out every table and every figure in the main text**
  - **Number tables, graphs in order of appearance**
  - **Put each table on a separate manuscript page**
  - **Put each figure on a separate manuscript page**

## Figures and tables

- **Graphs**
  - Categorical data → Bar graphs
  - Ordered, scaled data → Line graphs
  - Label graph axes
  - Show error bars for plotted data (often SEM)
- **Tables**
  - Identify table content in the caption
  - Label every column and row
  - Follow journal guidelines (rulings, notes, footnotes, significance indicators)

## Figures and tables

- Captions for tables and graphs
  - **Principle: Tables, graphs stand alone**
  - Include enough information to understand the table or graph, without looking at text
  - Define all abbreviations

## Frequent *Tables and Graphs* problems

- **Graphs**
  - Graphs not appropriate for data (bar vs. line graphs)
  - Graph axes not labeled
  - Missing error bars
- **Tables**
  - Table content not identified in the caption
  - Missing column headings
- **Captions for both tables and graphs**
  - Not enough information to understand the table, graph
  - Undefined abbreviations



## *Working with the publication process*

# The publication process

## Four perspectives

### The publisher's perspective:

Journal publishing is ***BIG BUSINESS!!!***

**Publishers MUST HAVE** a stream of good papers

### Editors' perspective

**Editors want good papers that are easy to accept**

### Reviewers' perspective

**Reviewers want good papers that are easy to review**

### Authors' perspective

**Authors want to write papers that reviewers can review easily and that editors will want to accept**

## What editors want in manuscripts

- Content that fits the journal
- Reasonable scope
- Fit with journal style guidelines
- Readability
- Importance, originality, surprisingness

# The publication process

## What reviewers want in manuscripts

- Clear research questions, hypotheses
- Clear contributions to the literature
- Logical research designs
- Methods appropriate for hypotheses
- Results that address hypotheses
- Novel, surprising results
- Logical interpretations
- Clear writing
- Conformity to journal style

# The publication process

## Submission cover letter guidelines

- **Principle: Write a professional, peer-to-peer letter**
- **Personalize: Use the editor's name and the journal title**
- **Include all requested manuscript details**
- **BRIEFLY, tell why the paper is worth publishing**
- **Suggest possible reviewers**
- **Affirm the paper is not under consideration elsewhere**
- **Affirm conformity with ethical requirements**
- **Acknowledge potential conflicts of interest**
- **Include contact information**

## Frequent *Submission letter* problems

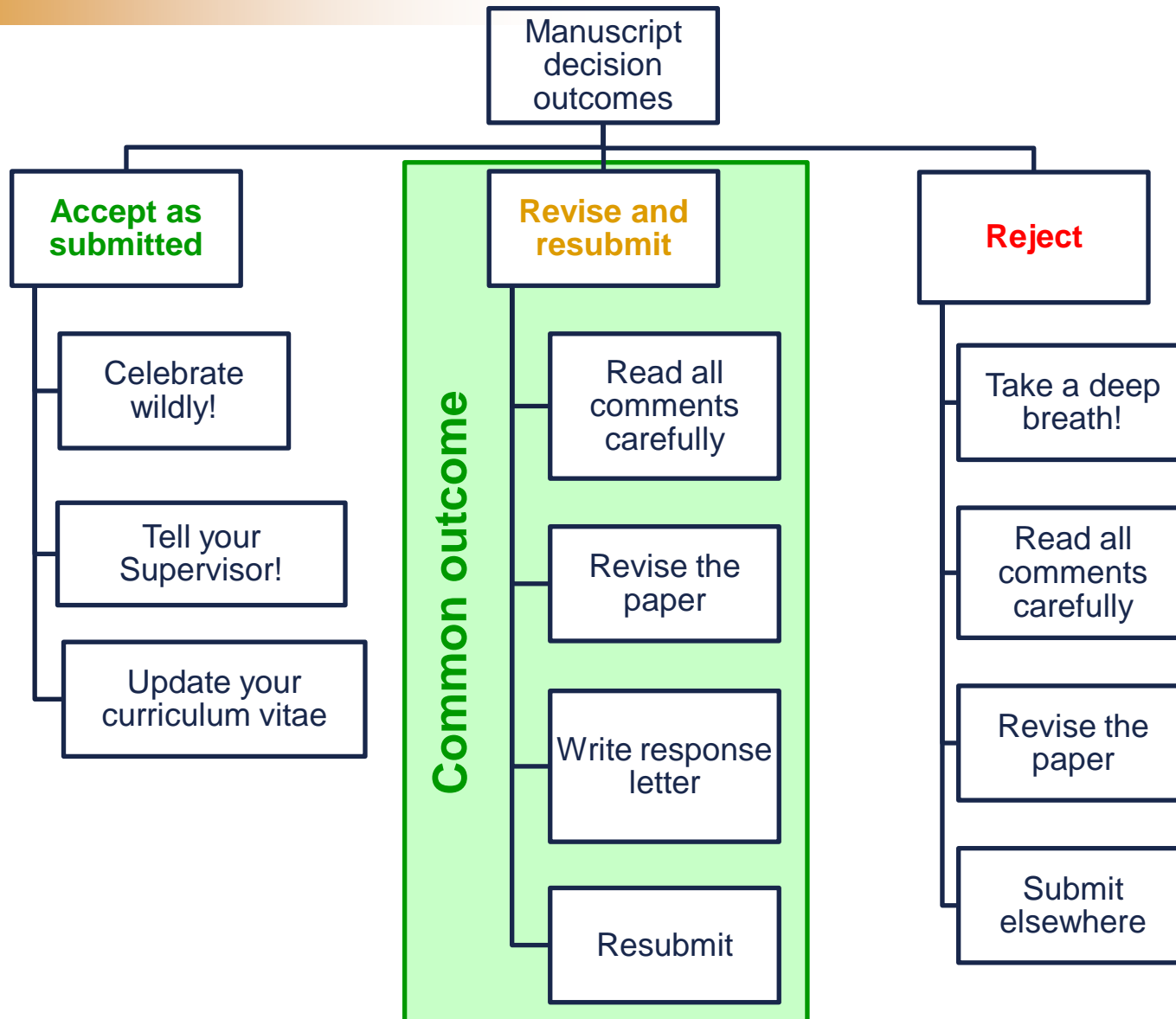
- Using a form letter
  - “Dear editor” (editors have **names!**)
  - Calling the editor Mr., Mrs., or Ms. (all are **Dr.!**)
  - “Your honored journal” (journals have **titles!**)
- Repeating the abstract (too much information!)
- Leaving out details the editor needs to know
- A submissive tone (respect yourself, your work!)

## Working with the review process

- Initial contacts
  - DO suggest reviewers in your submission letter
    - ✓ People who know you and your past work
    - ✓ People whose work is related to your own
  - It's okay to contact editors with questions
- Waiting...the hard part!
  - Give the reviewers and editor time to do their work
  - If the time seems excessive, inquire politely

**Eventually, you get...**  
**THE DECISION LETTER!**

# The publication process





## Revising manuscripts

- **Principle: Reviews tell you how to improve your paper**
- **Possible kinds of revisions**
  - **Rewriting**
  - **Reorganizing**
  - **Doing additional research**
- **Answer the comments, but also CHANGE THE PAPER**

## Re-submission response letters

- Response letter elements
  - Thank the reviewers for their time and effort
  - Answer every point that the editor and every reviewer made
  - Point out how you have changed the manuscript
- Responses to reviewer comments
  - "I agree and have changed the ms., in these ways..."
  - "I do not agree, for the following reason(s), and have not changed the paper...."
  - "I do not understand the reviewer's point, so I do not know what changes to make..."

# Frequent manuscript problems to avoid or correct

## Manuscript formatting issues

- Margins: 2 – 3 cm (1 inch), all sides
- Fonts: Typically, *Times New Roman*, 12-point, black
- Line spacing: Double space everything
- Paragraph indentation -- 1 cm
- Text justification –left justified, ragged right
- Running head, page numbers – insert these
- Section headings – follow journal guidelines exactly
- Hyperlinks (tables, figures, references) – omit them
- Revised papers: show only the text to be reviewed

# Frequent manuscript problems

**Paragraph issues: Length -- Too long AND too short!**

- **Example (yes, this was one single paragraph!):**

Based on the Chinese genome-SNPs genetic information provided by the 2009 Hapmap database (<http://www.hapmap.org>) and gold standard which was internationally recognized:  $r^2 = 0.8$ , MAF > 15%, two tag-SNPs (rs2242446, rs4783899) in the SLC6A2 gene and two (rs6277, rs2242592) in the DRD2 gene with high biological plausibility in the development and progression of the syndrome were selected using the Haploview software.

- **Too long:** Hard to read, mixes multiple ideas
- **Too short:** Single sentence (avoid single sentence paragraphs)

## Sentence issues: Long sentences

- Difficult to read, difficult to understand
- Example 1:

### Original wording – one sentence:

Therefore, we believe that, apart from paying special attention to Variable Y1, other variables, and their response to Variable X in particular, also need to be considered in order to decide whether an individual was affected.

### Better wording – two sentences:

(1) Therefore, apart from paying special attention to Variable Y1, other dependent variables also need to be evaluated. (2) In particular, one must also consider Variable Y2 in order to decide whether an individual was affected.

## Sentence issues: Long sentences

- Example 2:

Original wording – one sentence:

Sichuanhua is the dialect in Sichuan which is referred to as Southwestern Mandarin because Sichuan is in the southwestern part of a region spanning all of Northern China where dialects of Mandarin are most commonly found.

Better wording – three sentences:

(1) Sichuanhua is the dialect in Sichuan. (2) Sichuanhua is referred to as Southwestern Mandarin, because Sichuan is in the southwestern part of a region spanning all of Northern China. (3) In that region, dialects of Mandarin are most commonly found.

## Frequent language problems

### Sentence issues: Passive voice construction

- **Passive voice form:** Object → passive verb form → agent
- **Active voice form:** Agent → active verb form → object
- Problems with passive voice sentences:
  - Agent often omitted → meaning unclear
  - Passive voice sentences are often longer
- Examples
  - Passive form:** “It has been shown [by whom?] that...”
  - Active form:** “Smith (2014) showed that...”
  - Passive form:** “Participants were recruited [by whom?] from...”
  - Active form:** “We recruited participants from...”
- Comment: Use of personal pronouns (I, we) to avoid passive voice construction is generally acceptable



## Frequent language problems

### Sentence issues: Comma splices

- Two independent clauses joined by a comma
- Solutions for comma splices
  - Start a **new sentence** (often best)
  - Replace the comma with a **semi-colon**
  - Insert a **conjunction**

# Frequent manuscript problems

## Frequent language problems

- Comma splice example 1:

Original wording:

We analyzed communication in a closed group, whether communication in an open group would show the same characteristics is an interesting question.

Alternate wording (start a new sentence):

We analyzed communication in a closed group. Whether communication in an open group would show the same characteristics....

Alternate wording (insert a semi-colon):

We analyzed communication in a closed group; whether communication in an open group would show the same characteristics....

Alternate wording (insert a conjunction):

We analyzed communication in a closed community, but whether communication in an open group would show the same characteristics....

## Frequent language problems

- Comma splice example 2:

Original wording:

Some researchers attempted to integrate the withdrawal concept with its structure, the concept can distinguish between various causes of withdrawal.

Alternate wording (start a new sentence):

Some researchers attempted to integrate the withdrawal concept with its structure. The concept can distinguish....

Alternate wording (insert a semi-colon):

Some researchers attempted to integrate the withdrawal concept with its structure; the concept can distinguish....

Alternate wording (insert a conjunction):

Some researchers attempted to integrate the withdrawal concept with its structure, because the concept can distinguish....

## Frequent language problems

### Grammar issues: Unclear pronoun antecedents

- Antecedent: Noun or noun phrase to which the pronoun refers
- **General rule:**  
Readers look back to the most recent reasonable antecedent that matches in number and gender
- **Problem:**
  - Pronouns with unclear antecedents → Unclear meaning
  - Common mistake: Pronoun matches the closest noun (...but the closest noun may not be the actual antecedent)
- **General solution:**  
Replace the pronoun with the noun or noun phrase

## Frequent language problems

- Unclear pronoun antecedent example 1:

### Original wording:

Agreeable people are characterized as straightforward, trustworthy, altruistic, modest, and tender. **It implies** that agreeable individuals value harmony in interpersonal relationships.

(**Problem:** Unclear antecedent the pronoun, “it”)

### Alternative wording:

Agreeable people are characterized as straightforward, trustworthy, altruistic, modest, and tender. **Those characteristics imply** that agreeable individuals value harmony in interpersonal relationships.

## Frequent language problems

- Unclear pronoun antecedent example 2:

### Original wording:

Our results showed the opposite relation compared to the literature from Western societies, and thus **they** are important in the sense of highlighting cultural differences.

**Problem:** Unclear antecedent for the pronoun, “**they:**”

“**societies**” – closest matching noun (in context, unlikely)

“**literature**” – no (number mismatch)

“**results**” – likely what was intended

### Alternative wording:

Our results showed the opposite relation compared to the literature from Western societies. Thus, **our results** are important in the sense of highlighting cultural differences.

## Frequent language problems

### Grammar issues: Verb tenses

- Generally, use present tense for existing circumstances or on-going actions

Example 1: Enrollments for migrant children in the current school year ~~showed~~ [show] remarkable increases.

Example 2: Existing regulations ~~controlled~~ [control] access to support services.

- Generally, use past tense for completed actions

Example 1: The design we used ~~takes~~ [took] into account two issues.

Example 2: In the study we conducted, students ~~are~~ [were] required to write about the feedback on their linguistic errors.

## Frequent language problems

### Grammar issues: Number disagreement

- Subject-verb (A frequent problem: matching closest noun)

Example 1: **Each** of these papers ~~have~~ **[has]** different levels of review. Singular subject (each; NOT “papers”), plural verb (have)

Example2: **Publishing** an article in a scientific journal ~~cost~~ **[costs]** money. Singular subject (publishing), plural verb (cost)

- Noun-pronoun

Example 1: **Adolescents** felt a strong sense of belonging to ~~his or her~~ **[their]** ethnic group. Plural noun (adolescents), singular pronouns (his or her).

Example2: Brown described executive **function**, and divided ~~them~~ **[it]** into six modules. Singular noun (function), plural pronoun (them).



## Frequent language problems

### Grammar issues: Articles

- Articles (a, an, the)
  - “a” and “an” refer to non-specific instances of the noun
  - “the” refers to specific instances of the noun
  - Correct usage is difficult for Asian language speakers
  - **Non-native writers often omit needed articles**

# Frequent manuscript problems

## Spelling issues: Confusable words

access – assess

accept – except

affect – effect

advice – advise

board – bored

born – borne

compliment – complement (often!)

dominant – dominate

ethic – ethnic

from – form (very frequent!)

lose – loose

moral – morale

pass – past – past

principal – principle

since – sense

site – sight – cite

verses – versus

public – pubic (embarrassing!)

rational – rationale

to – too – two

there – their – they're

than – then

**...and many, many more!**

***Your spell checker will not find these! You must do that!***

# Frequent manuscript problems

## Frequent language problems

### Punctuation issues: Commas

- Comma placement can completely change sentence meaning

#### Example 1:

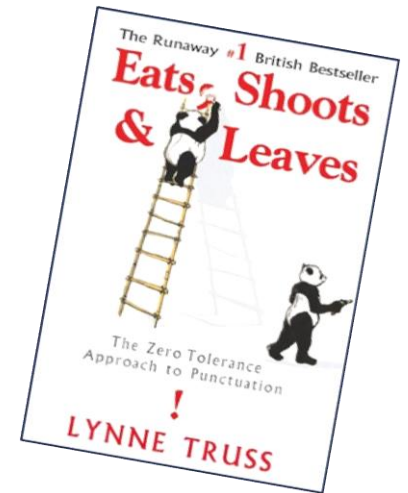
**The panda eats, shoots, and leaves.**

Now, remove the commas!

**The panda eats shoots and leaves.**

- Removing the commas turned VERBS (“shoots,” “leaves”) into NOUNS

**Many English words can be both nouns and verbs!**



# Frequent manuscript problems

## Frequent language problems

### Punctuation issues: Commas

*Example 2 (my favorite!):*

**Woman, without her man is nothing.**

Needs a second comma for clarity: Perhaps it should be...

**Woman, without her man, is nothing.**

...OR perhaps...

**Woman, without her, man is nothing.**

***Answer: The choice depends on the intended meaning***

# Frequent manuscript problems

## Punctuation issues

- Quotation marks: Use only for direct quotations
- Parentheses
  - **Problem**: Nested parentheses – avoid these  
Example: We used the XYZ test (3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Smith, 1995)).
  - **Problem**: Back-to-back parentheses – avoid these  
Example: We used the XYZ test (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.) (Smith, 1995).
  - **Solutions for both problems**
    - ✓ Use a semi-colon:  
We used the XYZ test (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.; Smith, 1995).
    - ✓ Use square brackets:  
We used the XYZ test (3<sup>rd</sup> ed. [Smith, 1995]).

## Frequent language problems

### Some special issues

- Inclusive, non-sexist language
  - Avoid masculine pronouns as generic for “every person”
  - Use “he or she,” “him or her,” “his or hers”

**Original sentence:** Every participant gave **his [masculine generic pronoun]** informed consent.

**Better:** Each participant gave **his or her [inclusive pronouns]** informed consent.
  - Alternative solution – use plural nouns and pronouns

**Better:** All **participants** gave **their** informed consent.

## Some style issues: Abbreviations, acronyms

- Define any abbreviation or acronym...
  - In text, when it is first used
  - In titles
  - In abstracts
  - In table and figure captions
- Limit abbreviation, acronym use  
(Ask yourself: Can the reader remember them all??)

## Some style issues: Abbreviations, acronyms

- Common Latin abbreviations
  - “i.e.” and “e.g.”
    - ✓ Use inside parentheses
    - ✓ Outside parentheses, use words (“that is,” or “for example”)
  - “et al.” – typically used only with references
  - “vs.” – use inside parentheses; otherwise, spell out



## Some style issues: Numbers

- Numbers
  - Numerals vs. number words
    - ✓ Usually, for 1 – 9, use words (one, two, ... , nine)
    - ✓ 10 or greater, use numerals (10, 11, 12, ....)
    - ✓ But...check specific journal style guidelines
  - Numbers to start sentences (**No; use number words**)
    - Example: ~~27~~ students participated.
    - Correct: ~~27~~ **Twenty-seven** students participated.
    - Correct: **A total of** 27 students participated.

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