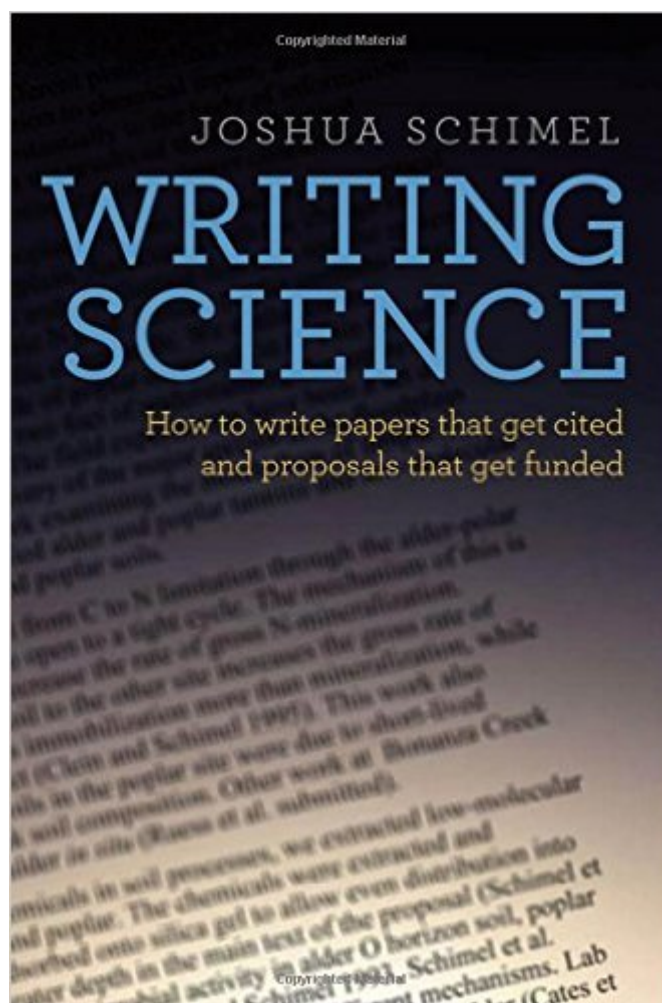# Writing Science: How To Write Papers That Get Cited And Proposals That Get Funded

Synopsis

As a scientist, you are a professional writer: your career is built on successful proposals and papers. Success isn't defined by getting papers into print, but by getting them into the reader's consciousness. Writing Science is built upon the idea that successful science writing tells a story. It uses that insight to discuss how to write more effectively. Integrating lessons from other genres of writing with those from the author's years of experience as author, reviewer, and editor, the book shows scientists and students how to present their research in a way that is clear and that will maximize reader comprehension.The book takes an integrated approach, using the principles of story structure to discuss every aspect of successful science writing, from the overall structure of a paper or proposal to individual sections, paragraphs, sentences, and words. It begins by building core arguments, analyzing why some stories are engaging and memorable while others are quickly forgotten, and proceeds to the elements of story structure, showing how the structures scientists and researchers use in papers and proposals fit into classical models. The book targets the internal structure of a paper, explaining how to write clear and professional sections, paragraphs, and sentences in a way that is clear and compelling. The ideas within a paper should flow seamlessly, drawing readers along. The final section of the book deals with special challenges, such as how to discuss research limitations and how to write for the public. Writing Science is a much-needed guide to succeeding in modern science. Its insights and strategies will equip science students, scientists, and professionals across a wide range of scientific and technical fields with the tools needed to communicate effectively.

Book Information

Paperback: 240 pages

Publisher: Oxford University Press; 1 edition (November 29, 2011)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0199760241

ISBN-13: 978-0199760244

Product Dimensions: 9.1 x 0.6 x 6.1 inches

Shipping Weight: 15.4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 stars See all reviews (86 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #12,525 in Books (See Top 100 in Books)   #20 in Books > Science & Math > Science for Kids   #41 in Books > Textbooks > Humanities > Literature > Creative Writing & Composition   #71 in Books > Reference > Writing, Research & Publishing Guides > Writing >

Customer Reviews

There are lots of books on science writing available and they take you painstakingly through every nuance of structure and detail required to produce a scientific manuscript. This book is different. It focuses on how to write a compelling story. I have 70 published papers in international, peer-reviewed journals; and I want to go back to each and every one of them and rewrite them with the messages from this book clear in my head and clear to the reader. This book focuses on you as a writer first and foremost, and a scientist second. It distills what I've been trying to teach my own students, with insight and clarity far more considered and polished than my own, in an engaging and fun read. If you want to write proposals that get funded, and papers that get widely-cited, then read this book and put its lessons to work. I loved the book: it's now the lab-group reading for next semester.

This book was much more useful than I thought it would be. My expectation was that it would contain some helpful pointers, but that it would not revolutionize my writing. Having nearly 30 papers/book chapters, more than 1000 citations, and some funded proposals under my belt already, I thought I had a decent grasp on scientific writing. This book helped me realize that I had a lot to learn - and then taught it to me! The best part about it is that it solidifies nebulous ideas about good and bad writing, and provides concrete ways to organize your writing, from the level of the whole paper down to individual sentences. Now I wish I could go back in time to rewrite all of my previous papers!Also, I was expecting this book to be helpful, but dry read, but was pleasantly surprised by how engaging it was. Who would have thought that a book on science writing would actually be entertaining and funny, while being reassuring at the same time? It really is an entertaining and easy read, though.I have already had all of my graduate students read this book, and have been talking about it incessantly at meetings. My postdoc has been doing the same thing - without any prompting from me. It has had a profound influence on the way the folks in my lab think about science writing, and has altered my perspective on writing forever. Be warned, however, that after you read this book you will want to start relentlessly editing all of the scientific writing you read.

This is not a fiction book you read before you go to bed. It is one of "boring" science related books; probably more aimed towards people who just started their career in science as PhD student. However, this book excited me by its clear messages and very engaging writing style. If you are

scientist you don't hear every day or even at all that science writing is "STORY TELLING". This main message clearly stuck in my head. Author does not just plainly said so, he eloquently "told" his "story" about "story telling" with well-chosen examples from published articles and enriched it with his extensive experience in reviewing numerous grant proposal and papers. He didn't stop with only "story telling"; he presented techniques how to do in the second part of his book. Overall this was probably the best book on this subject by not only its content, but also its writing style. Therefore I would definitely recommend this book to read.

I recently read this book as well as David Lindsay's Scientific Writing = Thinking in Words. Both are good, but of the two, Schimel's book is more complete, more nuanced, and more fun to read. His main focus is that, in order to be read, remembered, and cited, you must present your work as an interesting story. He explains the elements of storytelling as they relate to science writing, and how to employ those elements throughout your paper. Each chapter has examples throughout and exercises at the end.I recommend both Schimel's book and Lindsay's for anyone who has to write about scientific research. If you want to choose only one, Lindsay is quicker, but Schimel is better.

I wanted a book that I could give to my graduate students who are just beginning to write their first papers. While this book is packed with useful information, it is unfortunately not suitable for this purpose. It's as if this book is missing its first half: how to _start_ writing science. It's all about _editing_ your science (and on that front, it does a fantastic job). The pluses: (1) lots of excellent, very specific advice; (2) not too subject-specific (I am in a difference science field, yet I found the suggestions completely portable). The minuses: (1) there is absolutely no advice / strategies on how to get going -- developing a crude outline, starting with the least intimidating sections, working from figures to the text, making progress on collaborative projects when getting conflicting feedback from 10 co-authors, etc. (2) The overwhelming emphasis on extremely careful editing obscures the fact that good ideas are more important than perfect writing and the fact that the greatest value of the submitted paper is in its being done. I suspect giving it to students would be counterproductive in that they are already intimidated enough by the task even without setting such a high bar from the get-go.

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