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Writing tips I

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01

General Tips

01 Write Concisely.

Scientific writing emphasizes brevity and clarity. It is important to include all of the information necessary to reproduce your research and discuss your findings but not more than is necessary. One important step towards this goal is to delete uninformative or redundant words. The list on the top includes "wordy" phrases. The list on the bottom provides improved versions.

✗
brief in duration
sufficient in number
The wound was of a serious nature.
The solution was red in color.
mix together
the reason was because

✓
brief
sufficient
The wound was serious.
The solution was red.
mix
because

Another way to avoid wordiness is to avoid writing grandiosely. It will impress no one and will make it difficult to understand your point. Below are two examples. Notice how difficult it is to understand the example on the top, and how much easier it is to understand the example on the bottom.

✗
The validity of the structural information obtained will depend on the fidelity of reconstitution of the proteolipid in a native conformation under the condition or incorporation into vesicles.

✓
Such structural information is valid only when the reconstituted proteolipid has the native conformation.

02 Avoid Nominalization.

This tip is tied directly to Tip #1, and the best way to understand my point is to give you two examples.

✗ This paper gives an analysis of the problem and offers a solution.

✓ This paper analyzes the problem and solves it.

The second sentence is brief, to the point, easier to read, and much more powerful. However, it is still not perfect and remains obscure. It would be best to include more information and thus make an impact on the reader. Here are two possible ways to give greater context to the sentence.

✓ Even a precursory analysis reveals several promising solutions, the least expensive of which is X.

✓ A thorough analysis failed to solve the problem fully, but X is the most practical short-term strategy.

03 Know when to use passive vs.

active voice. This is an area that is very difficult even for a native speaker, and where there are two different points of view. Contrary to traditional scientific writing, nowadays experts prefer the active voice because it keeps the paper brief, is more direct, and sounds more natural.

✗ A detailed description of the apparatus is presented in this report.

✓ This report presents a detailed description of the apparatus.

However, it is sometimes better to use the passive voice when the one performing the action is not important.

✗ This writer purchased bovine serum albumin from Sigma.

✓ Bovine serum albumin was purchased from Sigma.

04 Use parallel construction of sentences.

This is an easy tip to learn once you get the hang of it. When there are two or more items in a list within a sentence, a parallel structure will be easier for the reader to understand.

- ✗ I like to run in the park, sleeping late, and it's also fun to make home videos.
- ✓ I like running in the park, sleeping late, and making home videos.
- ✓ It's fun to run in the park, sleep late, and make home videos.

In the two correct sentences, the items in the list follow the same grammatical pattern. For scientific writing, the same rule must be applied, as shown in the following two examples.

- ✗ A 10 mg dose produces no effect, a 20 mg dose produces a small effect, but patients demonstrate a noticeable effect from a 30 mg dose.
- ✓ A 10 mg dose produces no effect, a 20 mg dose produces a small effect, but a 30 mg dose produces a noticeable effect in patients

05 Use of Germanic Construction.

This area deals with the use of several adjectives before a noun that make the phrase difficult to read and understand. Here is a case that will go against Tip #1. Instead of being more concise, a few more words and punctuation marks will make the sentence easier to understand.

✗

Simian virus transformed fetal mammalian heart fibroblast

The gas analyzer sampling tube is then connected to the calibrator mixing chamber.

Respiratory rates were measured with a Yellow Spring Instruments Co. oxygen monitor system.

✓

Simian virus-transformed fibroblast from fetal mammalian heart

The sampling tube of the gas analyzer is then connected to the mixing chamber of the calibrator.

Respiratory rates were measured with an oxygen monitor system (Yellow Spring Instruments Co.).

06 Choose Your Editor Carefully.

When choosing an editor, many writers will make one of these mistakes:

✗ Choose a fellow Korean colleague who has spent a few years studying abroad and who understands the subject material, but cannot produce an article free of grammatical errors.

✗ Choose an ESL teacher living in Korea who might provide valuable advice regarding grammar, but does not possess the academic background necessary to understand the subject material.

1. General Tips

E-World Editing offers a better solution. By being based in the United States, E-WE is able to work closely with American universities and research institutions and provide you with an editor who:

- is a native speaker of English.
- has the academic background to understand the terminology of the research material.
- has been trained in the special problems Korean writers have when writing English.

E WORLD EDITING

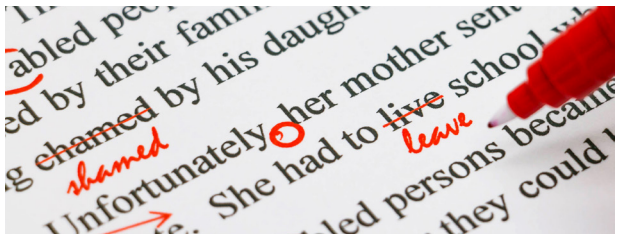
Writing tips I

02

Verb Tense

2. Verb Tense

One of the most common problems I see in papers today is the incorrect usage of verb tense. The reasons for this problem are that English verbs function very differently from Korean verbs, and the fact that there are 12 verb tenses in English. Choosing the correct tense is vital to convey the accurate meaning, especially in scientific research. Below are some important rules to help you decide which tense to use.



01 Citing previously published work - Present Tense

When a scientific paper has been validly published in a primary journal, it becomes knowledge. Therefore, whenever you cite previously published work you must treat it with respect. In English, we do this simply by using the present tense. For example, one should write "The world is round." not "The world was round." Here are examples of an incorrect sentence, the corrected version, and other correct sentences:

- Streptomycin **inhibited** the growth of M. tuberculosis (13.)
- Streptomycin **inhibits** the growth of M. tuberculosis (13).
- Serological tests commonly **are used** for the diagnosis of T. infections.
- Several recent reports (2,3,6) **describe** similar findings.

When an author's name is given at the beginning of the sentence and not in parentheses, either past or present tense can be used for the verb that is linked to the author. However, the verb that refers to the scientific work itself must still be given in the present tense. Please note the following examples:

✓ Smith (1975) **showed** that streptomycin **inhibits** growth of the disease organism. **[OR]**

✓ Smith (1975) **shows** that streptomycin **inhibits** growth of the disease organism. **[BUT NOT]**

✗ Smith (1975) showed that streptomycin **inhibited** growth of the disease organism.

02 Citing published information that cannot be generalized - Past Tense

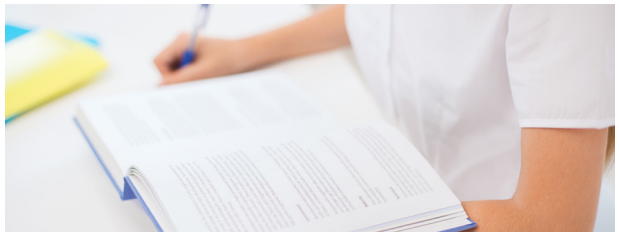
Often, results have been obtained under very specialized conditions and only pertain to the particular study being reported. Numerical data sometimes fall into this category. In this case, use past tense.

✓ Barber (1980) reported that 28% of the 396 wasps in his study **showed** signs of parasitism.

03 Referring to your own work - Past Tense

When results are unpublished, including the work you are writing about, it is not established knowledge. Therefore, use past tense to describe what you have done.

- In the study presented here, the drug **killed** 80% of the M. tuberculosis bacilli.
- Our data **showed** that few of the mice **survived**.



04 Referring to repeated events - Present Perfect Tense

This is a difficult tense to use correctly. When observations or actions have been repeated or continued from the past to the present, present perfect tense should be used. For example:

- Nesting behavior **has been studied** under many environmental conditions.
- These drugs **have been shown** to produce significant elevations in blood pressure.

05 Sections of a Scientific Paper

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY:

Refers primarily to the author's own unpublished results. Use mostly **past tense**.

INTRODUCTION:

Mostly emphasizes existing established knowledge. Use mostly **present tense**.

MATERIALS & METHODS and RESULTS:

Both of these sections describe what you, the author, did and found. Use mostly **present tense**.

DISCUSSION:

This is the most difficult section to write. The Discussion emphasizes the relationship of the author's work to previously established knowledge, so **both past and present tenses** are needed.

E WORLD EDITING

Writing tips I

03

Strings of Nouns and Adjectives

3. Strings of Nouns and Adjectives

In English, it is very common to use one noun to describe another noun, for example heart disease (a two-noun cluster). This phrase has the same meaning as cardiac disease (an adjective and a noun), and the two phrases can be used interchangeably. Two-noun clusters are acceptable and usually cause no problem for the reader. However, if three or more nouns are used in one cluster, to the point where there is a long string of nouns and adjectives modifying one another, problems arise. First of all, the reader easily gets lost before he reaches the main noun. Note the following example of poor writing that was actually published.

⊗ Five two week old single comb white leghorn specific pathogen free chickens were inoculated with approximately 105 tissue culture infected doses of duck adenovirus.

If you cannot understand this, don't feel bad because I can't either. The noun 'chickens' has 11 words describing it! The sentence is very difficult to understand because the reader is unsure which nouns are substantive and which are modifiers.

Many scientific writers make this error because they are trying very hard to be brief. In my first set of tips, I instructed that brevity should be a goal in scientific writing. However, clarity is always more important than brevity. The following example is obviously brief, however it is not clear and could be interpreted in many different ways. Even though it is not necessarily from a scientific report, similar occurrences can be found in literature from every academic field.

aged dog meat samples

This phrase could have at least five different meanings:

1. samples of aged meat fed to dogs
2. samples of aged meat from the bodies of dogs
3. aged samples of meat from the bodies of dogs
4. aged samples of meat fed to dogs
5. samples of meat from the bodies of aged dogs

3. Strings of Nouns and Adjectives

When you edit your own article (which you should do BEFORE you send it to E-World Editing or any native-speaking editor), try to circle every group of more than two nouns. Your goal is to reduce these strings to simple pairs. There is a saying in English that is useful to remember; "Two is company, three is a crowd." While this phrase usually refers to a couple who wants to be alone, it also applies to this method. The following are some examples of phrases that contain a string of nouns or adjectives, and following them are clearer revisions.

A system necessitated automated motor starting circuit

A 4 month secretory cell produced mucosal accumulation history

The negative penicillin skin test result group

Blue absorbing pigment spectral curve

Climate controlled gene cluster phenotype variation

Two dimensional real time ultrasonographic blood flow detection techniques

A calibrated transit time ultrasonic blood flow probe cable end

An automated motor-starting circuit required by the system

A 4-month history of accumulation of mucosa produced by secretory cells

The group with negative results on the penicillin skin test

Spectral curve for blue-absorbing pigment

Climatically controlled variation in gene-cluster phenotype

Ultrasonography techniques that detect blood flow in two-dimensional real time

The cable end from an ultrasonic blood-flow probe calibrated to measure transit time ultrasonically

Before you begin to take apart these long strings in your own paper, be sure to determine the precise relationship of one word to another. Then express this relationship by adding the necessary prepositions, commas, and hyphens. Be careful that you do not unintentionally change the meaning.

The following are some exercises you can do to practice. Good luck!

EXERCISES:

A Remove the ambiguity from the strings of nouns and adjectives listed below. You can rewrite each more than once to express different meanings.

1. mature muscle iron
2. chronic depression symptoms
3. renal lithium excretion

B Improve the sentences below. In order to do so, you may need to choose a meaning because of the ambiguous phrases. Therefore, more than one answer is possible and your revision should be judged by its clarity.

1. The three cases all had histologically confirmed metastatic malignant intra-abdominal tumors.

2. The present study examines various immunospecific drug sample combinations and their inhibition producing effects upon human peripheral blood leukocytes.

E WORLD EDITING

Writing tips I

04

Commonly Misused Words 1

4. Commonly Misused Words 1

People who are non-native speakers of English often misuse words or confuse pairs of similar words. You might be surprised to know that this is a very common problem for native speakers as well. Therefore, when you read articles written by native speakers of English, do not assume that all word usage is correct. Here is a short list of words and pairs of words that I often see misused by native and non-native speakers alike.

affect/effect:

These words are often confusing for both native and non-native speakers. **Affect** is a verb and **effect** is a noun. If you look in a dictionary, you might find that effect can be used as a verb, but you should not follow this advice. The use of effect asit has a verb is old, awkward, and avoided by good writers.very specific meaning.

case/patient:

A **case** is a particular instance. It can be evaluated, followed, and reported. A **patient** is a person who is under medical care. Do not call an animal a **patient**. Also a sick person who is not receiving treatment is not a **patient**.

continually/continuously:

Continual means to happen over and over in frequent intermittent episodes. **Continuous** means to occur without interruption. Using **continuous**, for some reason, is very popular with Korean writers, usually in an incorrect manner. For example:

The patient continually complained of chest pains for two weeks.

The patient continuously complained of chest pains for two weeks.
(If this sentence is interpreted literally, then the patient did not eat or sleep. He did nothing but complain of chest pains. This might not be the best example to give you, but I think you can see how the two words should be applied in your own writing.)

4. Commonly Misused Words 1

dose/dosage:

A dose is the quantity to be administered at one time, or the total quantity administered. Dosage, which is the regulated administration of doses, is usually expressed in terms of a quantity per unit of time. Here is a correct example.

✓ The patient was given a **dosage** of 0.25 mg every four hours until the entire dose had been ingested.

negative/abnormal and positive/normal:

Negative and positive are words describing cultures, tests for microorganisms, tests for specific reactions, and reactions to tests. **Normal** and **abnormal** describe observations, results, or findings from examinations and tests.

principal/principle:

As a noun **principal** means a leader, and as an adjective it means the highest rank. A **principle** is a fundamental rule or law. The following example shows both words used correctly.

✓ The lack of money was the **principal** reason we could not continue our study of biological **principles**.

each other/one another

Varying means changing, but various means of several kinds, or of different kinds. Be sure of your meaning when you use this. Consider the following sentences and the confusion they can cause:

✗ In this study we used varying amounts of.....

In this study we applied varying conditions to the.....

These sentences imply that the amounts and conditions were individually, continually, and perhaps randomly changed, whereas various would have implied that there was a selected set of amounts and/or changes that were used. In most studies, various would be the proper word for these sentences.

4. Commonly Misused Words 1

percent/percentage:

This is a very common mistake I see in papers that we receive. **Percent** should only be used when it is preceded by a number, e.g. ten **percent**). Use percentage in all other cases.

etc./and so on/and so forth:

First of all, let me say my personal feeling is that these words should be avoided in academic writing. They should certainly not be used several times throughout an article as I have often seen. Never use them with the phrase **'such as'**. This phrase already indicates that your list is not complete and that you are only giving examples.

specially/especially:

These two words are often confused, misused, and overused by Korean writers. The can sometimes mean the same thing, but **specially** never means 'more importantly' or 'moreover'. It usually means 'for a specific purpose or a designated reason'. **Especially** should rarely begin a sentence. Depending on the author's intent, phrases or words such as 'more importantly', 'moreover', 'notably', or 'specifically' are better choices. The following are two good examples of the words being used. The next two are bad examples of sentences I often see.

✓ The hotel was specially designed for wheelchair users.

✓ Drug X was effective in helping the patients lose weight, especially those over 35 years of age.

✗ Drug X was effective in helping the patients lose weight. Specially, it reduced their cravings for food.
(A better word choice here would be 'specifically'.)

✗ Plan A was chosen. Especially, it was cheaper, more effective, and easier to implement.
(In this sentence, no adverb is necessary at the beginning. The information alone is sufficient).

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Writing tips I

05

Tables and Figures

5. Tables and Figures

There are three ways to summarize your data after the statistical analysis; in text, in tables, or in figures.

Text:

Of course, most of your summary will be in the form of written text. In some cases, all of it will be in text. Some writers have the mistaken idea that every scientific paper must have tables and graphs, but this is not so. Some results are very simple and can most easily be presented in a sentence with the data in parentheses.

Production was higher in Group A (52.3 +/-6.8) than it was in the control group (14.7+/- 3.2, t=11.8, df=55, p<0.001.)

Tables:

Tables are very useful in organizing and presenting lists of numbers or text. However, they are often overused. Most researchers use tables to organize data during the earlier phases of their research, and then feel that they must be included in the written work. When importing tables into the final document, only retain the data that is relevant to your work. Just because data was collected does not mean that it must be included in the final table.

Figures:

If your point is to show a trend or a pattern in the relationship of sets of values, do not use a table. Instead use an appropriate figure, usually some kind of graph. Although graphs are the most common type of figures, others include photographs, drawings, diagrams, and schematics.

Referring to Tables and Figures

Every table and figure included in your document **must** be referred to in the text. Your sentences should describe the relationship or trend you want to highlight, and it is often preferable to cite the table or figure in parentheses. Avoid using sentences that do not give information and only direct the reader to the table. These are wasted sentences. Keep in mind that a goal of scientific writing is to be clear and precise, and thus economic in the number of words used.

Table 1 shows the germination rates for Groups A and B.

The germination rates were much higher for Group A than in Group B (Table 1).

Abbreviations:

When referring to figures, it is acceptable to use the abbreviation, 'Fig.' if it is followed by a number, otherwise it must be spelled out. There is no acceptable abbreviation for Table. Both words must be spelled out in the descriptive legend.

Placement:

It is preferable to place each table and figure as close as possible to its initial reference in the text. However, in some kinds of manuscripts or if the tables are quite lengthy (more than 3/4 of a page), they are put on pages separate from the text material.

Numbering:

Figures and tables are numbered independently, in the sequence in which you refer to them in the text, starting with Figure 1 and Table 1. If you move them during the editing process, be sure to renumber them accordingly.

5. Tables and Figures

Descriptive Legends:

Legends are sometimes called captions. Like the title of the paper, legends should include enough information that a reader could look at the figure or table and understand it without referring to the text. This information should include things like the sample size, the relationship displayed or the treatment applied, location if appropriate, and the statistical tests if they are not included as footnotes. Do not simply state "X-axis label vs. Y-axis label."

Legend Placement:

Because of the nature of tables, which are read from the top down, table legends must be placed at the top of the illustration. Because figures are usually graphs that are read from the bottom up, figure legends must be placed at the bottom.

Example of a Good Table

Table 4. Population variation in hatch success (mean percent) of unfertilized eggs for females from populations sampled in1997. N = number of females tested. <--Table legend

Population	mean (%)	Standard deviation	Range	N
Beaver Creek [T]	7.31	13.95	0-53.16	15
Honey Creek [T]	4.33	7.83	0-25.47	11
Rock Bridge Guns Creek [T]	5.66	13.93	0-77.86	38
Cedar Creek [P]	6.56	9.64	0-46.52	64
Grindstone Creek [P]	8.56	14.77	0-57.32	19
Jacks Fork River [P]	5.28	8.28	0-30.96	28
Meramec River [P]	5.49	10.25	0-45.76	45
Little Dixie Lake [L]	7.96	14.54	0-67.66	71
Little Prairie Lake [L]	6.86	7.84	0-32.40	36
Rocky Forks Lake [L]	3.31	4.12	0-16.14	43
Winegar Lake [L]	10.73	17.58	0-41.64	5
Whetstone Lake [L]	7.36	12.93	0-63.38	57

[T] = temporary stream, [P] = permanent streams, [L] = lakes <--footnotes

<--Column titles

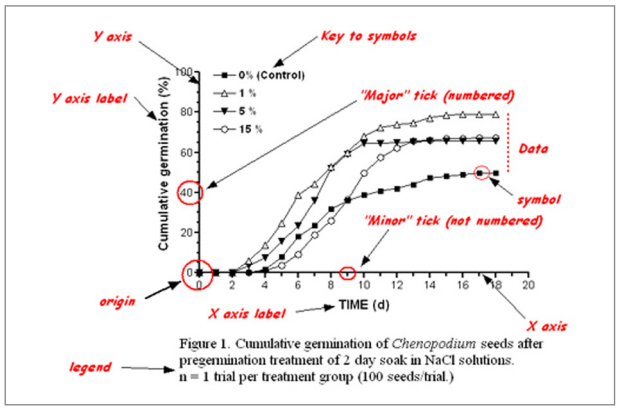
<--Table body (data)

<--Lines demarcating the different parts of the table

Please note the following things about this table:

- There is a period after the table number.
- The legend is at the top.
- The units are specified in column headings wherever appropriate.
- Lines are used to separate the legend, header, data, and footnotes.
- Footnotes are used to clarify points in the table, or to convey repetitive information about entries.
- Footnotes may also be used to denote statistical differences.

Example of a Good Figure:



Please note the following things about this figure:

- The legend is at the bottom of the figure.
- There is a period after the figure number and the word "Figure" is not abbreviated.
- The measured variable is labeled on the Y-axis. In most cases units are given here as well.
- Both the X-and Y-axes are labeled.

Other considerations when submitting to an international journal:

It is always important to check the Instructions to Authors before submitting your document to a journal. It will save time and reduce the chances of the journal requesting revisions before they will accept your article for publication. Here are the four main considerations regarding tables and figures.

Size:

Journals are usually published in either a one-column or two-column format. The size requirements for each are very different and must be followed.

Number:

Just as most journals have limits to the number of words in the text of each article, they also have a limit to the number of graphics that can be included.

Placement:

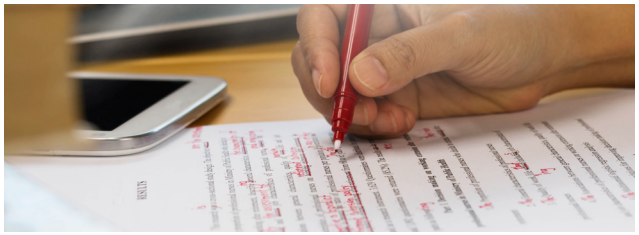
As mentioned earlier, it is preferable to place each table and figure as close as possible to its initial reference in the text. However, some journals only allow them to be submitted at the end of the article.

5. Tables and Figures

Photographs:

Some journals will only allow tables and line drawings such as graphs or diagrams. Other journals will also allow black and white photos, however it is difficult to determine the quality of the final publication because of the printing process. Other journals will not allow color photographs, or will only accept them if the author agrees to cover the reproduction costs. These costs are usually quite high.

When photographs are submitted, be sure to label them properly and follow the particular journal's instructions. For example, some journals do not allow adhesive labels to be used. Never write on the back of the illustration itself, as this can show through to the front. Since these illustrations are separate from the manuscript, be sure to keep duplicates in case they are lost.



E WORLD EDITING

Writing tips I

06

Abbreviations, Acronyms, Numbers

6. Abbreviations, Acronyms, Numbers

Abbreviations, acronyms and numbers are simple things that most writers take for granted. That is, most writers do not feel that they need any special attention. However, in scientific writing, nothing should be taken for granted, and there are several considerations when including these things in your manuscript.

Abbreviations are shortened forms of a complete word, sometimes followed by a period but sometimes not. Some common abbreviations are:

- Fig. (figure)
- d (day)
- h or hr (hour)
- min (minute)
- s or sec (second)
- ml (milliliter)
- Jan. (January)

Of course there are many other abbreviations, and their use is acceptable and often preferable. However, journals have varying rules for which abbreviations can be used without definition. It is vital that you check the journal's guidelines for accepted abbreviations. For example, some publications accept abbreviations for time (e.g., second, minute, hour, day) while others do not. Publications rarely accept abbreviations for months (e.g., Jan. for January) within the text of the manuscript; however, common abbreviations are accepted within figures and tables. (If they are not well-known, define them.) The word 'figure' often may be abbreviated as 'Fig.' However there are special rules for this usage. It is often abbreviated when it falls within parentheses, and it can only be abbreviated when followed by a number or numbers. When it is the first word of any sentence, 'Figure' must be spelled out, and picky journals will also require it to be spelled out at the beginning of the actual figure legend. Do not abbreviate units of measurement without a number; "Several ml. were added" is wrong. "Several milliliters were added" is correct.

Because 'Fig.' is the most commonly misused abbreviation in scientific writing, it warrants its own examples:

Fig. 1 shows the data. (As the first word of the sentence, 'figure' must be spelled out)

Figure 1 shows the data.

The data are shown in the Fig. (only abbreviate when a number follows)

The data are shown in Fig. 1.

Acronyms:

Acronyms, or initialisms, are formed by the first letters of a group of words, sometimes pronounced as a word (e.g., ANOVA for analysis of variance) and sometimes not (e.g., MRI for magnetic resonance imaging). Again, it is essential that the instructions the publication gives to authors be followed exactly. Those instructions should include a list of acronyms that are accepted without definition. If you are a medical researcher and are submitting to a journal outside of your particular field of study, do not assume that this journal will accept the same acronyms as those within your field. Reviewers, referees, and editors find it annoying when these instructions are not followed, increasing the chances that your manuscript will not be accepted. It may also give them the impression that the manuscript has already been rejected by another publication, because they assume you are following some other journal's instructions. If a particular acronym is not listed by the journal, it must be defined at first instance. Here are examples of the incorrect and correct ways to define an acronym in a scientific journal:

✗ CT (Computed Tomography)

✓ Computed Tomography (CT)

In the abstract, it is best to avoid using unfamiliar acronyms because they will still need to be defined at first instance there, and again at first instance in the body of the article. Simply spell out the term in full, unless it is used several times within the abstract.

Two important guidelines for acronyms:

1 - "When in doubt, spell it out."

2 - Check the journal's "Author's Instructions" for:

- Accepted abbreviations for units of measurement.
- Accepted acronyms that do not need defining.
- Use of acronyms in the article title and abstract.

Numbers:

Some journals will specify how to treat numbers, however most do not. Below are some conservative rules (in scientific writing, conservative is best) to follow when deciding when to spell out numbers and when to use Arabic numerals (i.e., 1, 2, 3...). The following information was taken from "Successful Scientific Writing" by J. Matthews, et al.

When to use Arabic numerals

RULE	EXAMPLES
All numbers 10 and above	Trial 13 35 animals 16 genera of legumes
All numbers before a unit of measurement	10 cm long 35 mg of the drug
Numbers with decimals	7.38
Numbers that represent statistical or mathematical functions or results, percentages or ratios.	Multiply by 5. fewer than 6% 3.75 times as many the 2nd quartile
Numbers below 10 that are grouped for comparison with numbers 10 and above in the same sentence.	4 of 16 analyses 3, 10, and 23 patients, respectively. lines 2 and 21
Numbers that denote a specific place in a numbered series, parts of a book or manuscript, tables, figures, and each number in a list of four or more numbers	Trial 6 Group 2 Table 4 The groups consisted of 5, 9, 1, and 4 rats, respectively.

When to write numbers as words

RULE	EXAMPLES
All numbers below ten	five conditions the experiments were performed four times a one-tailed t-test a three-way interaction
Numbers below 10 that are grouped for comparison with numbers also below 10	the second of four stimuli five of eight living animals in six cases
Any number that begins a sentence, title or heading - note hyphens with 2 or more words.	sixty-nine percent of the sample was contaminated. thirty-six patients were enrolled in the study.
Common fractions	one quarter reduced by half a three-quarters majority
The numbers zero and one are more easily read when spelled out.	a one-line computer code zero-based budgeting Only one patient survived.

As mentioned above, never start a sentence with a numeral. However, large numbers
are awkward and the sentence can often be re-written.

✗ 550 ml of hydrochloric acid should be added.

✗ (Correct but awkward)Five hundred fifty milliliters of hydrochloric acid should be added.

✓ The patient was 30 years old.

✓ A 30-year-old patient was admitted to the hospital.

6. Abbreviations, Acronyms, Numbers

There are certain cases in which words and numerals need to be combined in order to make the text more readable - for example, when they appear as back-to-back modifiers.

- two 13-ml aliquots
- three 96-well plates

Also, if more than two numbers appear back-to-back in a string, rewrite the phrase.

six 3-5 day intervals

six intervals of 3-5 days each

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