Key Moments and Helpful Resources from the Scholarly Publishing Webinar Series, co-sponsored by *Academic Medicine* and *MedEdPORTAL*

What Editors Want: Tips for Good Scholarly Writing, May 19, 2023

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Approach writing on 3 levels.

Word: Aim for plain language and consistent use of terms. Avoid jargon. "Make sure that the language you use is accessible." Sentence: Use active voice and avoid zombie nouns and forms of the verb to be as sentence starters. These strategies improve clarity and allow you to be "more economical in your word choice"—which is especially helpful when writing abstracts. Paragraph: Think of these as the building blocks of your writing. "It should be really clear to the reader why you're going from one sentence to the next and how your ideas relate."

3 Ways to Write Better

Concentrate on

- The word
- The sentence
- The paragraph

Don't overlook the importance of editing.

Start at the paragraph level. "Have you logically built an argument from the beginning to the end of your paper? Do the paragraphs fit together and is the information where it belongs?" Then move onto the sentences. "Are you using active voice and transitions? Do the sentences make sense within the paragraph and the paper as a whole?" Finally, attend to the words. "What's most important is that your writing is clear, not that you have every comma in the exact right place." Try reading your paper aloud because you hear differently than you see. "Where you naturally stop to take a breath is where there should be punctuation."

Next Steps: Editing Your Work

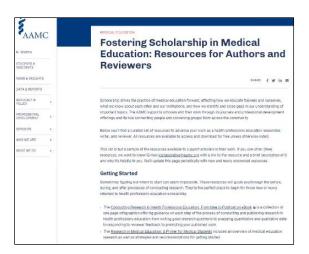
At the WORD level, think about the precision of your ideas.

At the SENTENCE level, think about the clarity of your ideas.

At the PARAGRAPH level, think about the structure of your ideas.

Consult available resources.

It's helpful to get an outside perspective. "Ask a colleague who's not familiar with your work to read your paper. A fresh set of eyes is going to identify typos you might have missed and can look at how you've built your argument over your whole paper." Remember too the wealth of available resources on scholarly writing and publishing.



Additional Resources and Recommendations

- **Get started with an overview of scholarly writing and publishing:** The <u>Fostering Scholarship in Medical Education</u> website features a curated list of resources for getting started, writing up and submitting your work, as well as professional development opportunities.
- Find actionable guidance for conducting and writing up your research: The Conducting
 Research in Health Professions Education eBook includes a collection of 40 infographics
 exploring every stage of medical education research, from writing in a compelling way to
 selecting the conceptual framework underlying your work to writing a research question to
 choosing a methodology and data analysis strategy to responding to reviewer comments.
- Get practical tips on where to submit your paper: The <u>Writing for Academia: Getting Your Research Into Print</u> article provides strategies for choosing a topic, writing up your work, deciding where to submit your paper, and navigating the review process.
- **Improve your writing:** The <u>Writer's Craft series</u> offers simple, easy-to-follow tips to improve your writing.
- Learn what reviewers are looking for when they evaluate your paper: The Review Criteria for
 Research Manuscripts book includes a helpful 1-page checklist that reviewers can follow when
 they're evaluating each section of a paper.

These key moments and helpful resources are from a monthly webinar series hosted by the editorial teams of the AAMC's 2 peer-reviewed journals, Academic Medicine and MedEdPORTAL. Sessions cover the importance of publishing your education scholarship and practical suggestions for how to do so successfully. All are invited to attend. <u>Learn more about upcoming sessions.</u>