

## 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

A presentation by Toni Gallo, MA, senior staff, *Academic Medicine*.

#### 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.”

#### 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.”

#### 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.

### 3 Ways to Write Better

#### Concentrate on

- The word
- The sentence
- The paragraph

### 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.

The screenshot shows the AAMC website with a sidebar on the left containing navigation links: SEARCH, STUDENTS & RESIDENTS, NEWS & INSIGHTS, DATA & REPORTS, ADVOCACY & POLICY, PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, RESOURCES, WHO WE ARE, and WHAT WE DO. The main content area is titled 'MEDICAL EDUCATION' and 'Fostering Scholarship in Medical Education: Resources for Authors and Reviewers'. It includes a paragraph about scholarship driving the practice of medical education forward, a list of resources available to support scholars, and a 'Getting Started' section with a link to a collection of one-page infographics.

### Additional Resources and Recommendations

- **Get started with an overview of scholarly writing and publishing:** The [Fostering Scholarship in Medical Education](#) 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 [Writing for Academia: Getting Your Research Into Print](#) 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 [Writer's Craft series](#) 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. [Learn more about upcoming sessions.](#)*