

Entre pares CONRICYT Consorcio Nacional de Recursos de Información Científica y Tecnológica



## 2014 Publications Workshop

WILEY






CONRICYT 2014 Pubs Workshop León; Albertine ©2014

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### La Bienvenida al Taller de Hoy

Me siento honrado de proporcionar orientación a usted, bibliotecarios y científicos, para ayudarle a publicar su investigación en revistas internacionales en la ciencia y la medicina

Kurt H. Albertine, Ph.D.  
Editor-in-Chief, *The Anatomical Record*




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### “Publishing Your Science”

Strategies for Maximizing Your Chances of Getting Your Papers Published in the Best International Journals

Kurt H. Albertine, Ph.D.  
Editor-in-Chief, *The Anatomical Record*




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## “How to Write Clearly”



Kurt H. Albertine, Ph.D.  
Editor-in-Chief,  
*The Anatomical Record*



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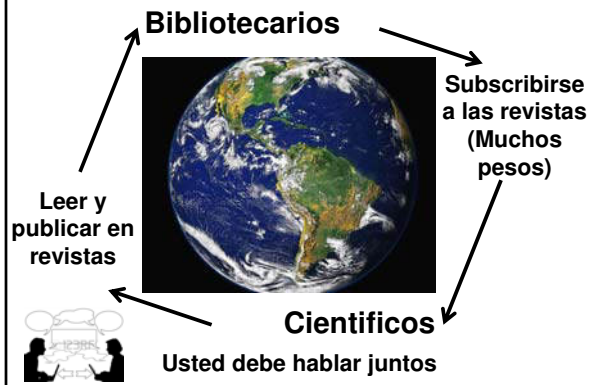
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## Importante Relación



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## **Publishing Your Science**

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### **Two Topics:**

**1. Why Publish?**

**2. How to Choose Your Journal Wisely**

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### **Why Publish?**

❖ **Publication provides an opportunity to tell your story**

**Once upon a time. . .**

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### Why Tell Your Story?

- ❖ Primary reason
  - To report the solution of an important scientific or medical problem
  - The outcome: To advance one's field

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### Peer-Reviewed Publications

- ❖ Validate your work through peer review
  - Your study is not officially part of the scientific record until it undergoes peer review
  - Provides a record that is available worldwide
  - Provides a record that is permanent

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### Why Publish?

- ❖ Secondary reason
  - To advance one's career
  - Having two reasons to publish can result in a conflict of interest
    - Primary reason conflicts with achieving the secondary reason
      - May contribute to research misconduct

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## Publishing Protagonists

Authors



Editors



Reviewers



Readers



For publishing to advance a field, all protagonists need to act ethically at all times

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## Where to Tell Your Story?

### ❖ Choosing a journal



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## Two Choices are Made

- ❖ **You** (the authors) choose where to submit (*i.e.*, which journal)
- ❖ **They** (the journals) choose what to publish (*i.e.*, which papers)
- ❖ But, **YOU** actually have some control over both choices!

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### Picking Where to Submit (Your Choice)

- ❖ What to consider?
  - Fit between your paper and the journal's scope
  - Reputation of the journal and its editorial board
  - Customer service of the journal

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### Fit between Your Paper and the Journal's Scope

- ❖ A good fit means that
  - Your paper is more likely to be accepted by the journal
  - Your paper is more likely to be read by the readers in your field
- ❖ Your goal in publication is to showcase your work
  - Showcasing advances both your field and your career

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### Reputation of a Journal

- ❖ Impact factor
- ❖ Common knowledge/bias in the field of a journal's quality (not necessarily the same as impact factor)
- ❖ Ranking in the field (e.g., 3rd out of 10 journals)
- ❖ Scientific quality of the editorial board
- ❖ Citation half-life
- ❖ Author's previous success or lack thereof with a particular journal
- ❖ Customer service

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### Be Aware

- ❖ Journals with the highest impact factor have
  - The highest non-review and rejection rates
  - High “page-pressure” rate, resulting in severe limitations in number of pages, figures, and references; much of the data becomes supplementary

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### Be Aware

- ❖ Journals with the highest impact factor
  - Reviews frequently require additional experiments, which delays resubmission
  - However, journals with the highest impact factor are widely read and cited
    - The science published in them is generally assumed to be better
      - And have notable instances of scientific misconduct

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### Customer Service of the Journal

- ❖ How quickly does a journal review?
  - How quickly does journal publish?
- ❖ How fairly does the journal manage review?
  - How helpful are the journal’s reviews?
- ❖ Are costs levied to publish pages or color figures?
- ❖ Are the number of pages, figures, or references limited?
- ❖ Do you like the quality of the product (e.g., figure reproduction)

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## You Have Two Opportunities to Sell Your Paper

- ❖ At submission
  - Use the Title, Abstract, and Introduction to announce that an important problem in the field is solved
  - Use the Results, Methods, and Discussion to construct a sound scientific argument to convince skeptical scientists
  - Use the Acknowledgments and Literature Cited to give credit where credit is due

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## Two Tips

- ❖ Write a Title that states the major result of the study (not what you did, but what you learned)
- ❖ In the Abstract, briefly summarize the topic of your study, its importance, what is known and unknown about the topic, your hypothesis, and what you learned by testing your hypothesis

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## Also Include a Cover Letter

“Dear Sir or Madam: . . .”

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### A Poor Cover Letter

- ❖ We are pleased to submit our manuscript . . .
- ❖ The method of our study is not modern, but we hope this study is quite original
- ❖ Therefore, we are encouraged and hope to find an audience for our research

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### A Good Cover Letter

- ❖ Introduces
  - The topic
  - The major result
  - The meaning (impact) of the major result
  - Assurance that the manuscript has not been published before AND is not submitted to another journal

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### You Have Two Opportunities to Sell Your Paper

- ❖ Second opportunity is at revision submission
  - Be professional and respectful, but you can challenge (with cogent and concise logic and facts) reviewers' and editor's comments
  - Respond to all criticisms with an appropriate revision or a reasonable explanation as to why a revision was not done
  - To some degree, this is a negotiation process, but the scientific standards (as interpreted by the editors) of the journal must be met

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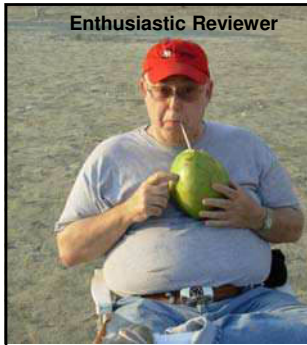
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**Enthusiastic Reviewer**



**Potential Outcomes**

**Unenthusiastic Reviewer**



**Muchas Gracias**

You have a HUGE influence on which outcome is your outcome

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# How to Write Clearly

Kurt H. Albertine, Ph.D.  
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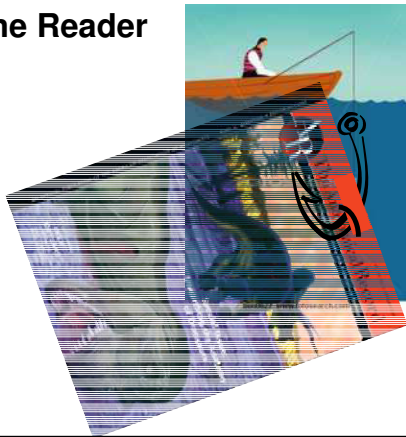
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## Hook the Reader



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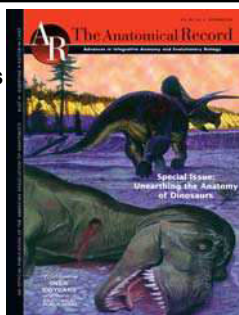
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### ❖ Excite editors and reviewers

- Why?
  - So that they want your manuscript published

### ❖ Excite readers

- Why?
  - So that they want to read your publication



## The Bottom Lines

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## What Makes Excitement?

### ❖ Excitement is

- Novelty
  - New discovery
  - More thorough insight
- Innovation
  - New methods, reagents, transgenic mouse
  - Substantive, clear (understandable) results
  - Scientific controversy



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## Expectations About Manuscripts

### ❖ Editors, reviewers, and readers

- An interesting story that
  - Revolves around the hypothesis or question
  - Conclusion that answers the hypothesis or question

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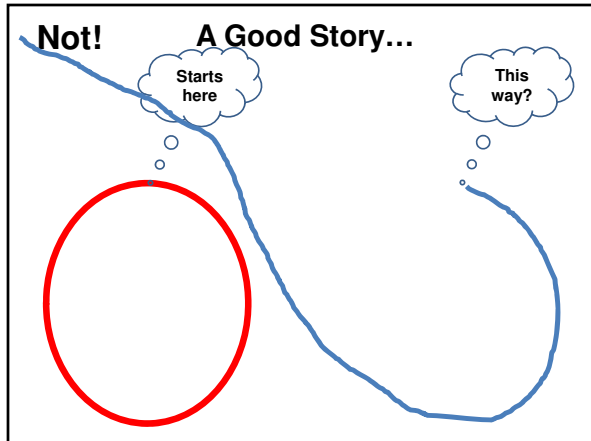
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### Outline

- ❖ Critical self-evaluation
- ❖ Write clearly

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### Critical Self-Evaluation

- ❖ Does the reviewer have to work to understand your manuscript?



• No



• Yes



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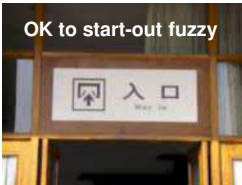
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### Definition of Clear Writing

OK to start-out fuzzy



- ❖ “Clear writing is writing that is incapable of being misunderstood” \*

- ❖ Quintilian, a Roman rhetorician, who lived in the first century A.D.

\* Zeiger. *Essentials of Writing Biomedical Research Papers*. 2000



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## Writing Clearly (for Understanding)

### ❖ Goals

- Unambiguous writing
  - Creates the least confusion
- Logical story
  - Creates a storyline
- Clear, simple, informative figures and tables
  - Makes the results obvious
- Place your study and results in context
  - Brings focus on significance and impact

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## Guides for Writing Clearly

### ❖ To write for understanding...

- Target the audience
- Determine how much to tell the reviewers
- Be a credible writer

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## Analogy: The First Date

### ❖ You want a second date

### ❖ Make the first impression a good impression!

- Title and Abstract
  - Captivate the imagination of the reviewers
    - Clear writing
    - Significance
    - Impact
  - Gives reviewers something to look forward to; not dread!

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### Be a Credible Writer

- ❖ To attain clear understanding, clear writing is required
  - The study of writing is ***NOT*** a waste of time!
    - Proper grammar (word choice, sentence structure, paragraph organization, and punctuation) are essential
      - Tools to attain understanding

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### Keywords

- ❖ Most important words
  - Why?

<u>Clear Keywords</u>	<u>Vague Keywords</u>
Rats	Animals

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### Unclear Word Choice

- ❖ Example: “Change”
  - What does “change” mean?
    - Who knows?
      - Increased/decreased?
      - Longer/shorter?
      - Heavier/lighter?
      - *Etc.*

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## Vague Words to Avoid

- ❖ Modifying words (adjectives, adverbs)
  - Adjective: 'Sick' (sick baby)
  - Adverb: 'Very' (very big)
- ❖ Jargon ("out there")
  - Where?
- ❖ Euphemisms ("to pass away"; die)

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## Pretentious Writing

"I'm disinclined to acquiesce to your request..."

... improvement

- ❖ "No"
  - Captain Barbossa to Elizabeth Swann



\* *Pirates of the Caribbean - The Curse of the Black Pearl*, 2003

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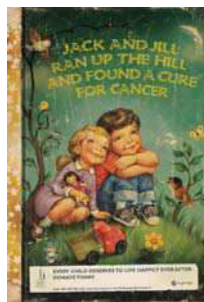
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## Putting Words Together: Sentences

- ❖ Noun verb completer
  - Jack and Jill ran up the hill
- ❖ About 20 words or less
- ❖ Use parallel construction
  - "drug A (1) increases blood pressure, (2) heart rate, and (3) breathing rate"
    - Describe in the same order



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## Putting Sentences Together: Paragraphs

- ❖ Fundamental unit of telling a story
  - One topic = one paragraph
  - If you change the topic, new paragraph

**Return Key**  
Creates a new paragraph. Wow!



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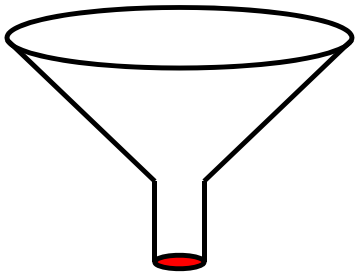
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### *Paragraph Analogy*



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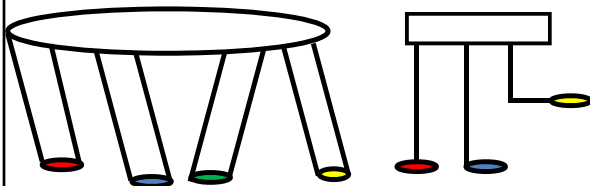
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**NOT!**



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## Guide for Paragraphs

- ❖ Begin with a powerful topic sentence
- ❖ Follow with details about the topic
  - Using logically organized sentences
- ❖ Repeat keywords, verbatim
- ❖ Use transition words to connect sentences
- ❖ Use consistent order (parallel construction)
- ❖ Use consistent tense and point of view

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## Creative Use of Punctuation

- ❖ How many of you use these punctuation symbols in one sentence?
  - ; : / \ { } [ ] ( ) -
- Why do you use them in one sentence?
- Consequence of using them?
  - Long sentences
  - Unclear meaning
- Solution: replace with a period

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## The Power of Punctuation

*Let's eat grandma.*  
*Let's eat, grandma.*

**COMMAS SAVE LIVES**



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**Muchas Gracias**

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