



Fundação Oswaldo Cruz

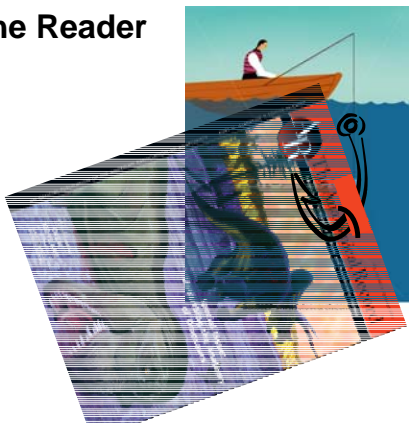
How to Write Clearly

The study of writing is ***NOT*** a waste of time!

WILEY  

Brasil2014 FIOCRUZ Pubs Workshops; Albertine ©2014

Hook the Reader




❖ 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



What Makes Excitement?

❖ Excitement is

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

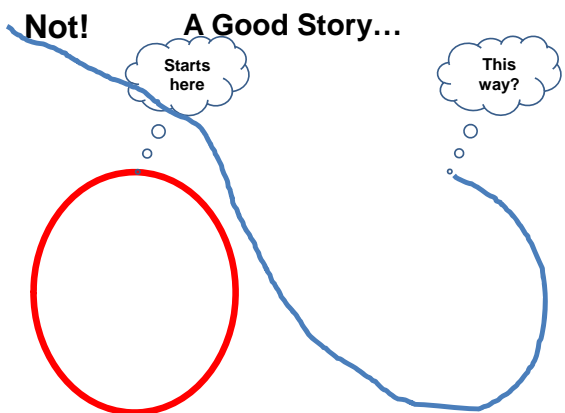


Expectations About Manuscripts

❖ Editors, reviewers, and readers

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

Not! **A Good Story...**



Outline

- ❖ Critical self-evaluation
- ❖ Write clearly

Critical Self-Evaluation

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



• No



• Yes



Definition of Clear Writing

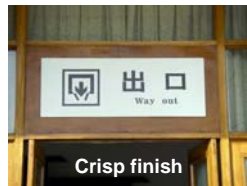
OK to start-out fuzzy



- ❖ “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



Crisp finish

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

Guides for Writing Clearly

- ❖ To write for understanding...
 - Target the audience and hook them
 - Be a credible writer

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!

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

Keywords

- ❖ Most important words
 - Why?

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

Unclear Word Choice

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

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)

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

Words must agree!



Lander, Wyoming, USA

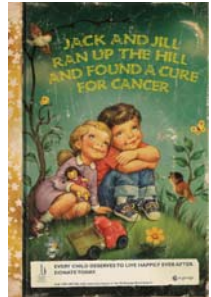
Words are not to be contradictory!



Kemmerer, Wyoming, USA

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



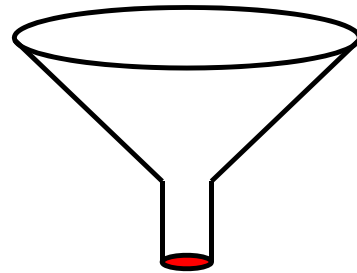
Putting Sentences Together: Paragraphs

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

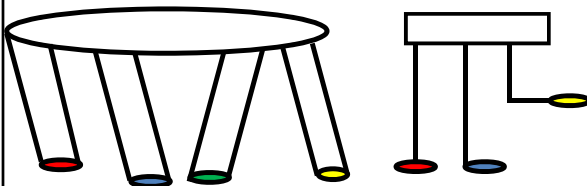
Return Key
Creates a new paragraph. Wow!



Paragraph Analogy



NOT!



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

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 (full stop)

The Power of Punctuation

Let's eat grandma.
Let's eat, grandma.
COMMAS SAVE LIVES



University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah October 2009



Brasil2013 Pubs Workshop; Albertine ©2013

Park City, Utah

- 2002 Winter Olympic Games -
4000 m
TC

DV ↓ PCMR

WOP



**Muito Obrigada
pela Atenção!**

Brasil2013 Pubs Workshop; Albertine ©2013