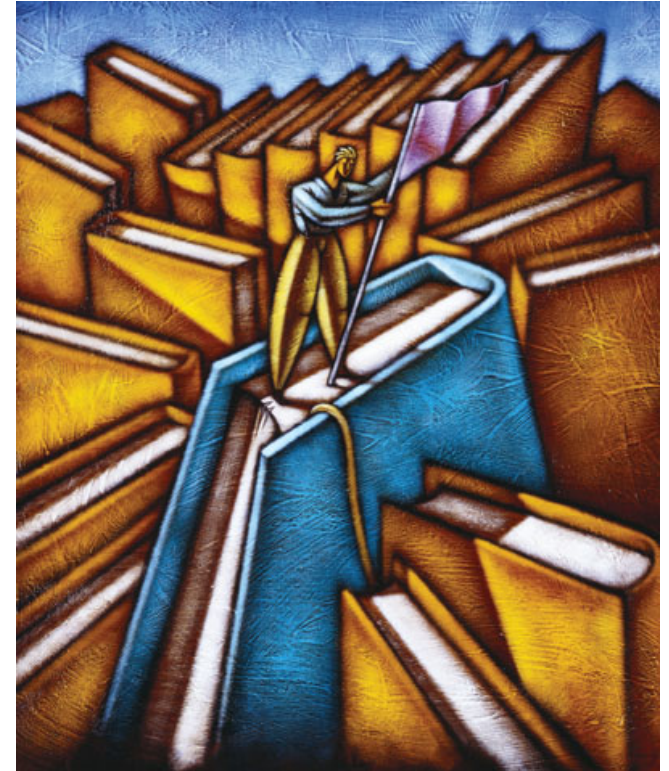


Planning a Paper

Professor Judy Williams

*Head of the Centre for Academic and
Researcher Development
Deputy Associate Dean for Staff Development
Faculty of Biology, Medicine and Health*

Judith.williams@manchester.ac.uk





At today's event, we want to make sure we address your questions so we'll be using a simple audience interaction platform called Meeto:

- Meeto allows you to submit your questions as well as up-vote the questions of other participants.
- Questions with the highest number of votes are more likely to be answered by speakers.

Throughout the day, please submit your questions and we will endeavour to answer as many as possible during the Q&A session at 15:00.

To join, please go to <https://web.meeto.io> and enter the meeting ID which is **199-584-268**

“Writing is easy. All you do is stare at a blank sheet of paper until drops of blood form on your forehead”

Gene Fowler

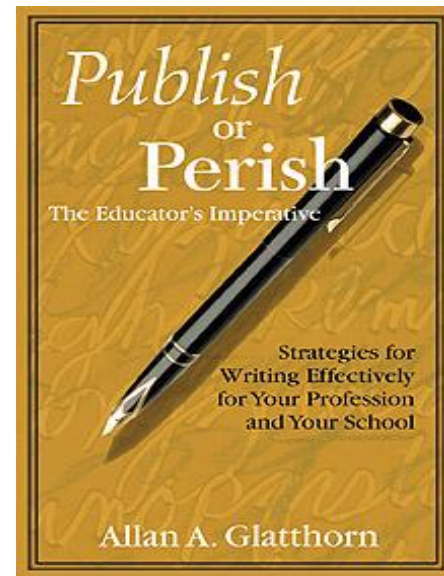
So why write and publish research papers?

Ideally:

- To share research findings and discoveries
- To solidify research ideas and generate new ones
- Advance the field and improve healthcare.

Practically:

- To make your viva easier
- To get a job
- To get promoted



Your experiences

- What makes a high quality research paper?
- What makes a poor research paper?



Overcoming the emotional challenges of academic writing

- View writing as a conversation not carving in tablets of stone
- Progression operates against depression
- Get into a rhythm - safeguard your '2 golden hours'

<http://www.socialsciences.manchester.ac.uk/morgance/ntre/methods-and-resources/av-resources/the-emotional-challenges-of-writing>

What makes a poor research paper?

Most common reasons for rejection

- Confirmatory (not novel)
- Poor experimental design
 - Poor controls
 - Hypothesis not adequately tested
- Inappropriate for journal
- Poorly written

What makes a good research paper?

- Good science
- Good writing
- Publication in good journals

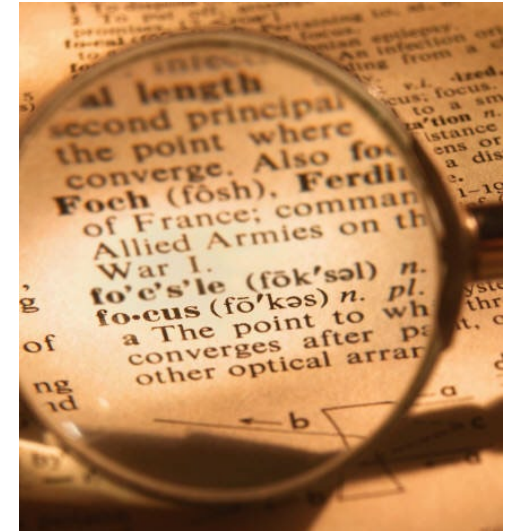
The first step to an effective publication

1.

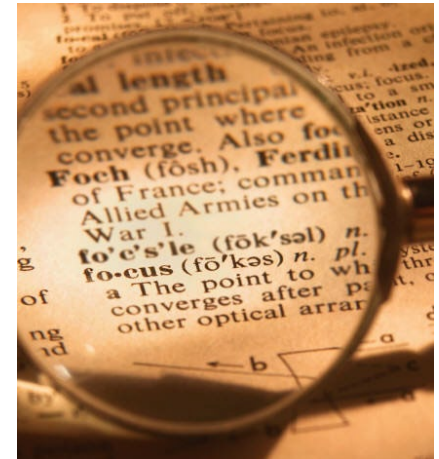
Key message statement

You need a key message statement to stay focused

- A simple concise statement
 - summarises what your results show
 - their broader implications
 - what is novel about your findings
 - why your research advances the field



Start writing your key message statement



- A paragraph that sums up your research
 - Spend 2 minutes working on your ideas
 - Discuss them with the person next to you
 - Was it easier to explain your work than write it?
 - If so then go about the process differently



The second step to an effective publication

1. Key message statement

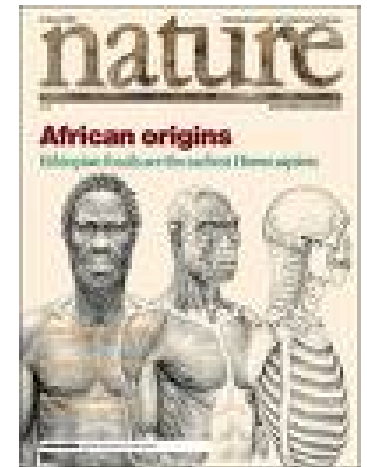
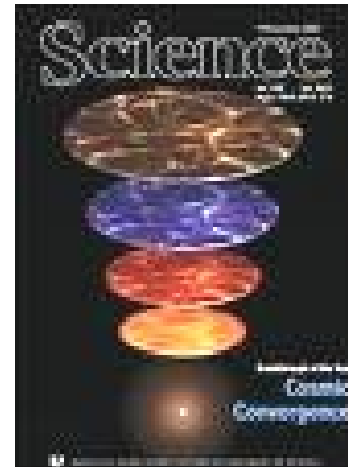
2. Appropriate target journal

What constitutes a good journal?

Impact factor – average number of times published papers are cited up to two years after publication

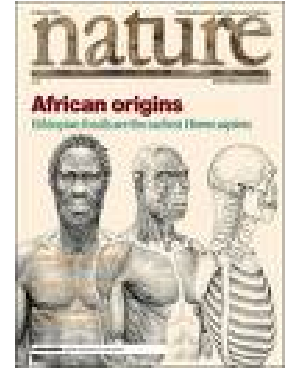
Circulation – how many readers and how widely the journal is circulated

Specialist versus
more general journal?



Choosing a target journal

- Aim high for your first submission
 - but be pragmatic
- **READ** and get to know the journals in your field
 - scope and audience
 - the kinds of papers they publish
 - average time between submission and publication
- Consult with more experienced colleagues
- Contact the journal editor or send a pre-submission query



Greatest challenge is deciding what to include and exclude

Take your reader on a journey with you...
but what kind?



For your downdraft ignore academic writing style

Titles

- Introduction = What I read
- Methodology = What I did
- Results = What I found
- Discussion = What I reckon

Introduction – Editor's 'dos and don'ts'

**Do keep it relevant,
up-to date & brief**

**Don't make
too long**



**Do end with
an hypothesis**

**Don't use the paper
to publicise
your own work**

Methods – Editor's 'do's and don'ts'

Do describe how the sample was recruited, highlighting representative nature of sample



Do end with a statistical section

Results – Editor's 'dos and don'ts'

**Do present data
indicating nature
of sample**

**Don't present
unreadable data
and p values**



**Do include
response rate**

**Don't present
irrelevant results**

Discussion – Editor's 'dos and don'ts'

Do state whether hypothesis upheld or not

Don't get carried away!



Do count pages and consider reducing text and figures

Don't go beyond/overstate your results

Abstract – Editor's 'dos and don'ts'

Do make abstract match your results



Conclusions must arise from results

An effective title

Histone H3 tail positioning and acetylation by the c-Myb but not the v-Myb DNA-binding SANT domain

Concise

Tom Cruise is dangerous and irresponsible

J. Clin. Invest. **115**:1964–1965 (2005)

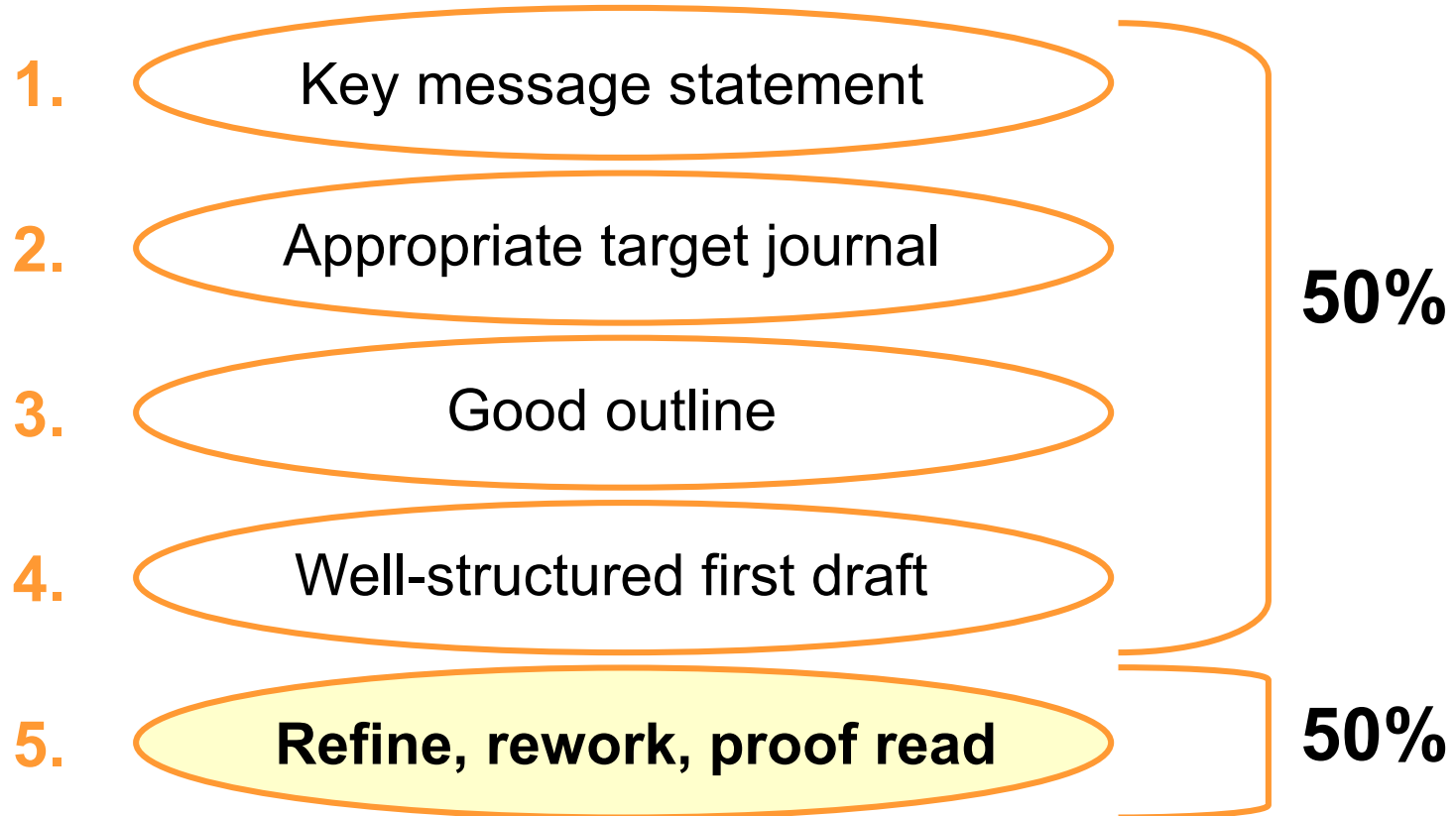
Catches the reader's interest

- Will determine whether paper gets read
- Gives an overview of your study, results and conclusions
- Avoid long titles
- Make it appropriate for the target journal
- Avoid abbreviations

References

- Use an electronic database e.g. Endnote or Refman
<http://www.mhs.manchester.ac.uk/trainingteam/postgraduateskills/>
- Relevant and recent
- Be highly selective
- Read the references
- Do not misquote
- Use correct style for journal

Leave plenty of time for the finishing touches



General writing tips to help you refine and rework your manuscripts.....

- Read well written articles
- Learn from reviewing other peoples work
- Online academic writing support

<http://www.mhs.manchester.ac.uk/trainingteam/postgraduateskills/AcademicWriting/Default.aspx>