

# How to write a **good** paper



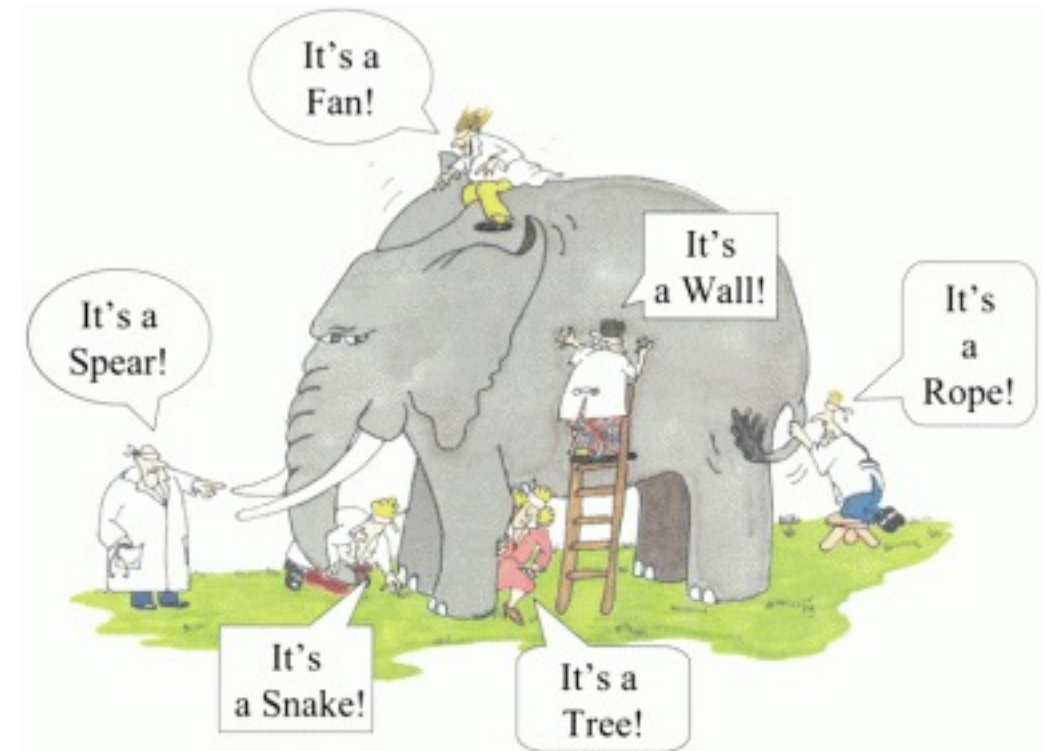
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**Interdisciplinary ocean science for sustainable development**

# What makes a **good** paper?

- High impact factor?
- Broad impact?
- Well written?
- Applied?
- Advance a specific discipline field?
- Well cited?
- Does it 'solve' an ocean problem?
- One that gets published



# How to write a paper?

-1: conduct research appropriately

0: mind map

1. Main message in 25 words

2. Write a working abstract

- Why are you doing this? [context and aim]
- What did you do? [methods]
- What did you find? [core results – say something useful]
- What does this mean? [interpretation in context]
- What is it good for? [application]

<https://conservationbytes.com/2012/10/22/how-to-write-a-scientific-paper/>

# How to write a paper?

3. Write title
4. Send main message, abstract, and title to co-authors
5. Decide on display items (upper limit of 6; mix of figures/tables)
6. Create figures and tables
7. Circulate display items to co-authors
8. Plan the skeleton (put time into this!)

<https://conservationbytes.com/2012/10/22/how-to-write-a-scientific-paper/>

# How to write a paper?

## 8. Plan the skeleton (put time into this!)

- Decide on main text length (most are ~3000 words)
- Work out size of each section (rule of thumb: 600, 900, 500, 800, 200)
- Plan paragraphs in each section (50-250 words in each para; write each para's main message)
- Circulate skeleton to coauthors

## 9. Write the paragraphs (in any order; try to set goals: 1hr for 1 para)

## 10. Revise the working abstract

## 11. Circulate full draft to co-authors!

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# English language dominance

English language dominance can:

- bias science (Konno et al. 2020 Eco. Evo.; Nunez & Amano 2021 NEE)
- hinder diversity (Ortega et al., 2020)

English as a foreign language can be:

- a barrier to individual scientist career (Ramírez-Castañeda et al. 2020 Plos One)
- a barrier to publication (Maas et al. 2021 Cons. Lett.)
- a barrier to retention of early career scientists

What can we do?

- Recognize you are not alone (only 5% of the worlds pop. speaks English as a first language)
- Be more understanding as reviewers (i.e. review on science not grammar; Romero-Olivares 2019)
- Be more supportive as co-authors during writing
- Use your scientific network to ask for help – proof reading/editing
- Identify journals that offer free copy-editing (e.g. Biotropica)
- Multi-lingual journals?
- International conferences to allow local language talks
- Grammarly plugin for Office Word

# Resources

- **How to write a scientific paper:**  
<https://conservationbytes.com/2012/10/22/how-to-write-a-scientific-paper/>
- **11-steps-to-structuring-a-science-paper-editors-will-take-seriously:**  
<https://www.elsevier.com/connect/11-steps-to-structuring-a-science-paper-editors-will-take-seriously>
- **Scientific Writing Made Easy: A Step-by-Step Guide to Undergraduate Writing in the Biological Sciences:**  
<https://esajournals.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/bes2.1258>
- **How to write a first-class paper:**  
<https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-018-02404-4>

# Q&A (now or over the week)

- What do you think makes a **good** paper?
- What is your single **best** tip for writing?
  - Mine: spend your first hour of the morning writing (before emails, before coding, before meetings, before anything else!)
- What tips do you have for writing when English is a foreign language?