



SciWrite 4.x

4.1: More paragraph practice

1. What's the paragraph about?
 - table: domain | measurement property | aspect
 - combine 2 paragraphs
 - separate ideas into 2 paragraphs
 - "however" used to introduce a contrasting idea, here new paragraph would have made sense

4.2: Overview of the Writing Process

1. **Prewriting (70 % time)**
 - collect, synthesize and organize information
 - brainstorm take-home messages
 - work out ideas away from the computer
 - develop a road map/outline
2. **Writing the first draft (10 % time)**
 - putting your facts and ideas together in organized prose
3. **Revision (20 % time)**
 - read your work out loud
 - get rid of clutter
 - do a verb check
 - get feedback from others

4.3: The Pre-writing Step

1. **Get organized first!**

- don't try to write and gather information simultaneously
- gather and organize information BEFORE writing the first draft
- example organizational system
 1. one single word document with information
 - reference to facts, figures of different papers
 2. put paper into specific folder

2. **Develop a road-map**

- arrange key facts and citations from the literature into a crude road map/outline BEFORE writing the first draft
- think in paragraphs and sections

3. **Brainstorm away from the computer**

- write on the go
 - while exercising, while driving alone, while waiting in line
- work out take-home messages
- organize your paper
- write memorable lines

4. **Compositional organization**

- like ideas should be grouped
- like paragraphs should be grouped
- don't "bait-and-switch" your reader too many times
 - when discussing a controversy, follow: arguments → (all) counter-arguments (all) → rebuttals (all)

4.4: The Writing Step

- tips for writing the first draft
 - don't be a perfectionist!

- goal: get the ideas down in complete sentences in order
- focus on logical organization more than sentence-level details (1.x - 3.x sentence level editing is possible during revision)
- writing the first draft is the hardest step for most people. Minimize the pain by writing the first draft quickly and efficiently

4.5: Revision

1. Read your work out loud

- the brain processes the spoken word differently than the written word!
- helps to find words that don't sound good

2. Do a verb check

- underline the main verb in each sentence. Watch for:
 1. lackluster verbs (are, was, were, be, ...)
 2. passive verbs (was observed, ...)
 3. buried verbs (A careful monitoring of ... and ... revealed ...)
- search for better/stronger verbs

3. Cut clutter

- Watch for:
 - dead weight words and phrases
 - empty words and phrases
 - long words or phrases that could be short
 - unnecessary jargon and acronyms
 - repetitive words or phrases
 - adverbs

4. Do an organizational review

- in the margins of your paper: tag each paragraph with a phrase or sentence that sums up the main point

→ then move paragraphs around to improve logical flow and bring similar ideas together

5. Get feedback from others

- ask someone outside your department to read your manuscript
- without any technical background, they should easily grasp: the main findings, take-home messages, significance of your work
- ask them to point out particularly hard to read sentences and paragraphs

6. Get editing help

- find a good editor to edit your work

4.6: Checklist for the final draft

☐ check for consistency

check for contradicting statements in e.g. the methods and result section

☐ check for numerical consistency. Do the numbers in...

...your abstract match the numbers in your tables/figures/text?

...the text match those in the tables/figures?

...each table/figure match those in other tables/figures?

☐ check your references

Do you have "references to nowhere"?

reference does not provide the indicated information/fact

author misinterpreted or exaggerated the findings from the original source

reference cites a secondary source rather than a primary source (citation propagation)

author mis-numbered the references

always cite/go back to primary sources

assume that other authors have made errors in citing sources

