

Reading List for Academic Writing¹

This reading list presents a curated selection of key resources that might be helpful in guiding graduate students, researchers, and academic professionals as they seek to refine their scholarly and scientific communication skills. The included texts are authored by recognized experts and feature works often considered influential in the fields of academic writing, English for Academic Purposes (EAP), and scientific communication. Collectively, these works address a comprehensive range of essential topics, from understanding the foundational principles of genre, structure, and reader expectation to mastering grammatical choices, text analysis, and important composition principles. While by no means exhaustive, and recognizing that many other valuable resources exist, this collection is offered as a substantive starting point and potential roadmap for writers looking to enhance the clarity, effectiveness, and impact of their academic work.

1. ***Abstracts and the Writing of Abstracts*** [1] by [John M. Swales](#) and Christine B. Feak is designed to demystify the construction of abstracts for graduate students and junior researchers, including ESL/EFL and native English speakers. The text systematically covers the composition and design principles for various types of abstracts, including those for research articles (both traditional and structured), short communications, conference contributions (including submissions and program summaries), and PhD dissertations. Adopting a practical approach, the book encourages users to engage in linguistic and rhetorical analysis, often comparing features across different disciplinary fields. It is rich with examples, tasks, language focus sections, and is suitable for independent study as well as for use in advanced writing classes, workshops, or seminars.

The late **John Swales** was a Professor of Linguistics at the University of Michigan. His principal research interest was in written discourse, particularly academic and research writing. He authored and co-authored numerous publications on academic writing, including twenty books and many research articles and book chapters over his career [2]. His associated interests involved genre theory, methods of discourse analysis, English for Academic Purposes, and comparative rhetoric. [3, 4]

2. ***Academic Writing for Graduate Students: Essential Tasks and Skills*** [5] by [John M. Swales](#) and Christine B. Feak is a comprehensive guide targeted at graduate students, including ESL/EFL and native English speakers. It aims to assist students in developing their skills as academic writers and improving their texts, such as data commentaries, summaries, critiques, and research papers. The book is organized into eight units, covering foundational aspects like audience, purpose, organization, style, and flow, as well as specific tasks like writing definitions, methods sections, introductions, and discussion sections. Its pedagogical approach is analytical and rhetorical, encouraging users to apply analytical skills to the discourses of their disciplines through varied tasks and activities. The book is designed for both classroom use and self-study, supported by an accompanying Commentary volume.
3. ***English in Today's Research World: A Writing Guide*** [6] by [John M. Swales](#) and Christine B. Feak is an advanced text primarily designed as a sequel to their *Academic Writing for Graduate Students*. It targets junior scholars and graduate students, particularly ESL/EFL speakers of English, but can also be beneficial for native speakers. The book focuses on helping users reflect upon sociological, cultural, and rhetorical aspects of American written research English, with a central concern for "research writer positioning". Its eight units cover topics such as the positioning of the research writer; the conference abstract and poster; constructing literature reviews; key aspects of dissertation writing (including abstracts, acknowledgments, and methods sections); and academic communications supporting the research process (e.g., requests, submission letters) and a research career (e.g., CVs, applications). The volume employs a genre-based approach with a strong emphasis on rhetorical consciousness-raising, asking users to conduct mini-analyses in their fields and incorporating research findings about research English. "Notes and Comments" are provided at the end of each unit to support self-study.

¹ Most annotation are generated by Google Gemini Pro 2.5 Pro with subsequent manual adjustments.

4. **Genre Analysis: English in Academic and Research Settings** [7] by [John M. Swales](#) offers an approach to understanding academic discourse, providing a theoretical framework applicable to practical situations such as teaching advanced writing and English for Academic Purposes (EAP). It demonstrates the value of genre analysis for studying spoken and written discourse and shows how a genre-based approach can be used to shape language learning and development activities. The book further explores a number of research genres, with particular emphasis on the research article. Genre Analysis is presented as important reading for those involved in EAP and academic discourse analysis, as well as those in post-secondary writing and composition.
5. **Research Genres: Explorations and Applications** [8] by [John M. Swales](#) offers a focused examination of research-related spoken and written genres, particularly at the graduate level. It is intended for researchers, graduate students, and classroom practitioners in applied linguistics, as well as scholars in communication, rhetoric, and education. The work establishes a framework for discussing research genres, examines the role of English in the research world, and delves into theoretical and methodological issues central to genre analysis. Key content highlights include explorations of significant spoken and written research genres such as Ph.D. dissertations, defenses, various research talks, and research articles.
6. **Grammar Choices for Graduate and Professional Writers** [9] by Nigel A. Caplan is designed to help graduate students, including ESL/EFL, and professional writers make informed grammatical choices to improve their academic and professional writing. The book aims to develop writers' grammatical awareness and use by focusing on "choices" within a functional grammar framework, rather than just prescriptive rules. Each of its eight units typically includes an overview of a grammar topic, a preview test for self-assessment, an authentic example of graduate student writing showcasing the grammar in use, clear descriptions of essential grammar structures drawing on functional grammar, applied linguistics research, and corpus studies, relevant vocabulary, numerous authentic examples, and varied exercises (such as completing sentences, writing, revising, paraphrasing, and editing). A key feature is a section in each unit that invites writers to investigate discipline-specific language use and apply it to an academic genre.

Nigel A. Caplan is a Professor and the Assistant Director for Teacher-Training programs at the University of Delaware's English Language Institute. His work and research focus on academic writing, L2 writing pedagogy, English for Specific Purposes (ESP), grammar, and corpus-informed teaching. Dr. Caplan has extensive experience in teaching academic communication, writing, and grammar to graduate and undergraduate students, as well as in teacher training and curriculum development. This book reflects his expertise in making grammar accessible and relevant for advanced writers in academic and professional contexts. [10]

7. **How to Write and Publish a Scientific Paper** [11] by Barbara Gastel and Robert A. Day, is a comprehensive guide for scientists and students on all aspects of preparing and publishing a scientific paper. The book aims to provide clear, practical, and often humorous advice to help researchers effectively communicate their work. It covers the entire process of scientific publishing, from understanding the definition and structure of a scientific paper to addressing ethical considerations, writing style, preparing tables and illustrations, citing references, submitting the manuscript, and navigating the peer review process. This long-established text is widely regarded as an essential resource for both novice and experienced authors in the sciences.

The late Robert A. Day was Professor Emeritus of English at the University of Delaware, Newark. For 19 years, Day directed the publishing program of the American Society for Microbiology (ASM) and served as managing editor for the Journal of Bacteriology and eight other ASM journals. He was also a president of the Society for Scholarly Publishing and a chairman of the Council of Biology Editors, and he conducted numerous seminars and workshops on scientific writing globally. His extensive experience in scientific editing and publishing informed this widely respected guide. [11, 12]

8. ***The Craft of Scientific Writing*** [13] by Michael Alley is a comprehensive guide aimed at helping scientists, engineers, students, and experienced professionals write more clearly and effectively to achieve their professional goals. The book presents scientific writing as a craft that can be learned and mastered, emphasizing clarity, precision, and conciseness from the reader's perspective. The book covers fundamental principles of scientific style, such as effective word choice, sentence construction, and paragraph organization. It also provides guidance on the effective use of illustrations, tables, and typography, and on preparing a wide array of scientific documents including journal articles, conference reports, proposals, presentations, professional correspondence, resumes, websites, and books.

Michael Alley is an associate professor of Engineering Communication at Pennsylvania State University. He is the author of three popular textbooks: *The Craft of Scientific Presentations*, *The Craft of Editing*, and *The Craft of Scientific Writing*. He has taught scientific writing and presentations to engineers and scientists on four continents, in sixteen countries, and for more than 150 companies, universities, organizations, and agencies. [13]

9. ***The Sense of Structure: Writing from the Reader's Perspective*** [14] by George D. Gopen presents a methodology for clear writing based on understanding how readers interpret prose. The book aims to teach writers to construct English sentences and texts that align with reader expectations, thereby enhancing clarity and reducing misinterpretation. The book is aimed at anyone wishing to improve their writing, particularly in academic and professional contexts where precision and unambiguous communication are essential. Its core purpose is to help writers diagnose and revise problematic prose by internalizing the perspective of the reader.

Gopen's approach, often referred to as "Reader Expectation Theory", focuses on how readers process information. The book demonstrates that readers have relatively fixed expectations of where certain words or grammatical constructions will appear in a unit of discourse. By bringing these intuitive reading processes to conscious thought, this text provides students with tools for understanding how readers interact with the structure of writing, from punctuation marks to sentences to paragraphs, and how meaning and purpose are communicated through structure. Throughout its chapters, the book provides numerous examples, analyzing sentences and passages from various fields to demonstrate how adherence to or deviation from these structural principles affects clarity and the reader's comprehension. Exercises are also included to help readers apply these concepts to their own writing.

George D. Gopen is Professor Emeritus of the Practice of Rhetoric at Duke University, where he taught for 30 years in the English Department and at the Law School. His work focuses on teaching writing based on "Reader Expectation Theory", a methodology he developed that emphasizes how readers process information. Dr. Gopen has extensive experience as a writing consultant for various corporations, law firms, scientific communities, and governmental agencies, helping professionals improve the clarity and impact of their written communication. [15]

10. ***The Science of Scientific Writing*** [16, 17] argues that the difficulties in reading scientific texts stem not just from the complexity of the subject matter, but often from a disregard for how readers process written information. The authors contend that clarity in scientific communication can be significantly improved by understanding and utilizing reader expectations related to English sentence structure.

The central thesis is that effective writing requires a reader-centered approach, where the structure of prose guides interpretation. The article emphasizes principles such as placing familiar information or context in the "topic position" (the beginning of a sentence) and new, emphasized information in the "stress position" (the end of a sentence or clause). By making writers conscious of these structural interpretive clues, the authors aim to provide tools for crafting prose that is not only clearer but also enhances the quality of the underlying scientific thought, making the structure of the prose align with the structure of the scientific argument.

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