

# AuthorAID Workshop on Research Writing

Nepal

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# Some Aspects of Writing Style; Writing in English about Your Research

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# Style for Research Writing: General Guidelines

- Write simply and directly.
  - Readers should notice mainly the content, not the language.
  - Remember that many readers are not native speakers of English.
  - As stated earlier: Write to communicate, not to impress.
- Follow instructions (and conventions) regarding structure.

# Style for Research Writing: General Guidelines (cont)

- If appropriate, use subheadings to guide readers.
- Organize information carefully.
- Provide overviews before details.
- In general, avoid very long paragraphs.
- In general, avoid very long sentences.
- Use mainly simple sentence structures.

# Style for Research Writing: General Guidelines (cont)

- Where possible, use common words.
- Define terms that might be unfamiliar to readers.
- In general, use only standard acronyms.
- Remember to define acronyms.
- Write concisely.
  - Saves space
  - Helps readability

# Writing Readably: A Brief Exercise

- Using simple, common words
  - attempt→                      fundamental→
- Deleting needless words
  - red in color→                      totally destroyed→
- Condensing wordy phrases
  - at this point in time→      in the event that→
- Using verbs, not nouns made from them
  - produce relief of→      provide an explanation→

# Writing in English about Your Research

# The Essentials

- The essentials are **content**, **organization**, and **clarity**.
- If a paper has excellent content, is well organized, and is clear, it is likely to be accepted even if the English is so-so.
- If a paper has poor content, is badly organized, or is unclear, it is likely to be rejected even if the English is excellent.



# Cultural Differences to Consider

- Directness of expression?
- Amount of detail
- Attitudes toward time?
- Attitudes toward using material taken from others' writing?

# Some Common Language Challenges

- Verb tenses
- Prepositions
- Articles (the, a, an)
- Sentence structure
- Sentence length
- Other

# Some Strategies

- Compiling lists of words and phrases commonly used in your field
- Writing simply
- Having people with a strong command of English review your drafts
- Other

# Some Resources on Research Writing

- Resources on use of English
- Other resources

# Some Resources

- OneLook Dictionary Search ([www.onelook.com](http://www.onelook.com))
- Academic Phrasebank  
([www.phrasebank.manchester.ac.uk](http://www.phrasebank.manchester.ac.uk))
- Grammar Girl ([grammar.quickanddirtytips.com](http://grammar.quickanddirtytips.com))
- *The Elements of Style* ([www.bartleby.com/141/](http://www.bartleby.com/141/))
- English Communication for Scientists  
(<http://www.nature.com/scitable/ebooks/english-communication-for-scientists-14053993>)

# More Resources

- Scientific English (set of lessons accessible through [www.authoraids.info/resource-library/china-medical-board-program-resources/cmb-lessons-in-scientific-writing/folder\\_contents](http://www.authoraids.info/resource-library/china-medical-board-program-resources/cmb-lessons-in-scientific-writing/folder_contents))
- Getting the Most out of Words ([www.authoraids.info/resource-library/Editing%20and%20Publication-Chapter%202.pdf/view](http://www.authoraids.info/resource-library/Editing%20and%20Publication-Chapter%202.pdf/view))
- AuthorAID at INASP ([www.authoraids.info](http://www.authoraids.info))

# AuthorAID at INASP

- A project to help researchers in developing countries to write about and publish their work
- Main components
  - Mentoring
  - Workshops
  - Openly accessible content

Thank you!