

AuthorAID Tip of the Week #26–#50

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Tip of the Week #26

Revising the draft of your paper is good, but resist the temptation to revise forever!

Tip of the Week #27

Your journal paper is a marketing tool. Ensure that you would like the paper to be associated with you for the rest of your life.

Tip of the Week #28

If you want your work to reach multiple audiences, don't only submit it to a journal. After publication, talk about it through a variety of communication channels, such as social media, print and broadcast media, and talks.

Tip of the Week #29

Be tactful in criticizing the work of other authors while justifying yours. Know that an author cited is a potential reviewer of your paper.

Tip of the Week #30

When giving your draft to someone to edit, let the person know what level of editing (light, medium, or heavy) you want. Specifying the level of editing may help you get the most useful feedback.

Tip of the Week #31

The abstract of a paper should represent the paper—and only the paper. Do not include information and conclusions not stated in the paper. If you wrote the abstract first, look at it again when the entire paper is completed.

Tip of the Week #32

Citation databases are now available to manage your references. But do not rely only on the databases. Reference lists still must be proofread. Use your eyes too.

Tip of the Week #33

Your writing is your voice. Try not to include too many quotes from other authors.

Tip of the Week #34

Be focused when choosing references to cite. Before citing any source, determine whether it adds anything meaningful to your paper.

Tip of the Week #35

If possible, place each reference immediately after the idea it refers to. For example, instead of writing "Some studies have shown the impacts of fish on the economies of Ghana and Nigeria (Mills, 2010; Jonathan, 2011)," write "Some studies have shown the impacts of fish on the economies of Ghana (Mills, 2010) and Nigeria (Jonathan, 2011)."

Tip of the Week #36

In this computer age, when writing a paper, consider saving your drafts with different file names. If you keep editing from your first draft, you might delete content you later wish you had retained.

Tip of the Week #37

Beware of making definitive statements that may prove to be false. For example, before writing a statement such as "Our study was the first to ...", ask yourself if you have searched the literature well. Also, because some publications do not show up on literature searches, consider cautious wording, such as "Our study appears to have been the first to ...".

Tip of the Week #38

Some authors write their first drafts as freely as possible without paying much attention to editing. Others write their first drafts by paying much attention to editing. Use the approach that works best for you.

Tip of the Week #39

Do not cite a journal article if you have read only the abstract. Without reading the full paper, you cannot know the details. Also, some abstracts are not accurate.

Tip of the Week #40

Especially if a journal has author guidelines that are not detailed, read recent articles in the journal. Then write your article accordingly.

Tip of the Week #41

If you are reading papers and see that certain authors are cited repeatedly, consider reading some papers by those authors. Frequent citation is often a clue that authors are leaders in their field.

Tip of the Week #42

Writing an effective abstract in few words is not easy. If a draft of your abstract exceeds the maximum allowed word count, consider "pruning" the background of the study and omitting the less important findings.

Tip of the Week #43

When writing a scholarly paper, be aware of what your reader may or may not know. Doing so may help you communicate ideas clearly.

Tip of the Week #44

Bad writing sometimes results when authors avoid responsibility for what they are writing about. Avoid "It is believed that" Take responsibility for what you are writing about.

Tip of the Week #45

If you use adjectives in scholarly writing, generally do not precede them with modifiers such as "very" and "quite". Such modifiers take up space and add little or no meaning.

Tip of the Week #46

If you want to know more about a research subject, consider reading a review article about it. Some online databases indicate recent papers that have cited the review article. Obtaining those papers can help you identify current literature on the subject.

Tip of the Week #47

Effective photographs can be worth a thousand words of type. But before publishing a photograph for which you do not hold copyright, be sure to obtain permission from the copyright owner.

Tip of the Week #48

If you are publishing an article in a journal that prints authors' phone numbers as part of their contact information, consider providing your mobile phone number. Doing so may make it easy for interested researchers and journalists to contact you.

Tip of the Week #49

Your article should be a complete story with a beginning, a middle, and an end. If you want to hook your reader, make a strong case for your article by crafting a convincing introduction.

Tip of the Week #50

Many researchers consult a statistician too late. If possible, do so while still planning a study. The statistician can help ensure that the research design is valid.