

AuthorAID Tips of the Week

#76-#100

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Tip of the Week #76

Some journals ask authors to provide keywords for their articles. When you think of possible keywords, try to use them in literature searches. If they yield articles with content similar to yours, they probably are good choices.

Tip of the Week #77

To aid understanding, consider not using double negatives in the same sentence. For example, instead of writing "Our results were not unlike previous findings," write "Our results resembled previous findings." (Note: Similarly, in the first sentence of this tip, "consider avoiding double negatives" would have been clearer than "consider not using double negatives.")

Tip of the Week #78

If you are reviewing someone else's paper, do not merely impose your ideas or indicate that parts of the paper are incorrect. Rather, offer useful suggestions.

Tip of the Week #79

When editing someone else's work, it can be helpful to use standard editing symbols. But if you do so, ensure that the author understands them. Some editing symbols and their meanings appear in a handout newly added to the AuthorAID Resource Library.

Tip of the Week #80

If you will be writing about a topic relatively new to you, consider compiling a list of specialized words and phrases that you find as you read about the topic. These words and phrases will then be readily available to use in the writing.

Tip of the Week #81

As a researcher, you have many duties in addition to writing scientific papers. To set realistic deadlines for completing such papers, keep these other duties in mind.

Tip of the Week #82

Consider setting incentives for yourself to make progress on your writing projects. For example, if you want to call a friend, tell yourself that you will do so only after you have drafted three paragraphs.

Tip of the Week #83

Many journals have different word limits for different categories of articles (for example, research reports and review articles). To find out the word limits, if any, see the journal's instructions to authors.

Tip of the Week #84

Being a peer reviewer of journal articles can be rewarding. It is also an important way to contribute to the scholarly community. If you are invited to review a paper on a topic you have expertise in, accept the opportunity, if possible.

Tip of the Week #85

If you are writing an article for a journal with relatively broad audience, consider putting your content in broad context.

Tip of the Week #86

Some researchers draft the body of an article first and then draft the title. Others draft a working title before starting the rest of the writing. Having a working title can help you keep your focus.

Tip of the Week #87

If your paper has a literature review section, this section should not only say what other researchers have found. It also should show how their research relates to yours.

Tip of the Week #88

Standard practice in scholarly publishing is to write out a number if it begins a sentence. Therefore, it generally would not be acceptable to write, "12 of the 15 dogs recovered." Instead, one could write, "Twelve of the 15 dogs recovered" or "Of the 15 dogs, 12 recovered."

Tip of the Week #89

When writing a grant proposal, be sure to use an appropriate tone. For example, the statement "This project may improve the operations of this research center" is too weak. Also, the statement "There is absolutely no doubt that this project will lead to an unprecedented improvement in this research center" is unrealistic and sounds arrogant. But the statement "This project will substantially improve the operations of this research center" is convincing.

Tip of the Week #90

Writing is a habit. If you write regularly, writing becomes part of your life.

Tip of the Week #91

Journal editors often ask authors to revise their papers. But never submit a paper that you think still needs work, in the hope of revising it after hearing back from reviewers.

Tip of the Week #92

Gathering resources and references is a necessary step in the writing process. But resist the temptation to look for such items forever. Eventually you need to get down to the business of writing.

Tip of the Week #93

If you are unsure whether developing an outline would help you write a scholarly paper, try writing two papers: one based on an outline and one not. Then compare the effort you put into writing the two papers, and choose the option that best suits you.

Tip of the Week #94

Setting concrete goals can be useful in scholarly writing. For example, the goal "to write part of my paper every day" is not concrete. However, the goal "to write four paragraphs every day" is concrete.

Tip of the Week #95

Consider monitoring your writing progress over time. For example, perhaps keep a record of how many words of your paper you write each day. Doing so can encourage you to keep writing.

Tip of the Week #96

When giving a presentation or writing a paper, show enthusiasm about your work. If you're not excited about your work, you can't expect anyone else to be excited about it.

Tip of the Week #97

If a deadline for conference abstracts is approaching but you haven't finished analyzing your data, what should you do? Consider writing an abstract that focuses on the process of your research and what the findings will indicate.

Tip of the Week #98

Acknowledging people who have helped you is a good practice. But make sure that they are willing to be acknowledged. And consider having them look at the wording of the acknowledgment, to help ensure that they are comfortable with it.

Tip of the Week #99

When deciding which journal to submit your article to, one factor to consider is the speed of publication. Some journals provide that information by indicating when the article was received, accepted, and published. Looking at those dates can help you make an informed decision.

Tip of the Week #100

When a journal sends you a proof of your accepted article to review, read it slowly to ensure that you can catch errors. Perhaps also have someone else read it, or have one person read the manuscript aloud while another looks at the proof.