

The science of writing

Anyone that has ever decided to write a research article is familiar with that indescribable feeling of staring at a blank page right before typing the first word. That first word is also the first step on the long journey to publication.

Writing is creating, regardless of what we are writing. Writing research articles is also a creative process, and not merely a routine, even though it has its own requirements and rules. Some authors have a pragmatic approach to writing or simply more experience or talent, and so they just sit down and write out what they have to. On the other hand, just thinking about the fact that they need to write an article after completing their research to earn vital points for research publications makes some people freeze up, and so they put off their writing until a better time.

Rules can make writing research articles considerably easier. The most fundamental among these is the logical and widely applied IMRAD (Introduction, Method, Research, and Discussion) structure, which is the most basic organizational structure that can be logically adapted to the article's content and type. Then there are the detailed instructions provided by each research journal, which restrict the number of words used and specify in detail the article's structure, formatting, language, and citation method. The journal *Urbani izziv* also uses such instructions for authors; they are quite detailed and extensive, but they can resolve practically any question related to designing and formatting the article. The authors that use the instructions of the selected journal thus have a framework in which they can present their research and its results.

However, content is even more important than form. Why do we write research articles? The right answer should be "to share new insights". This should be our guideline when we start writing.

Many articles have also been written on how to write research articles. For example, Andrade (2011) discussed how to write a good abstract, which is a very important part of an article and usually the only part that people actually read. People only read the abstract if their attention is first caught by the article's title. Only some continue by reading the introduction and discussion, and only the most dedicated or those researching a specific topic read the entire article. Therefore, the abstract must be representative, and it must convey the research background, method, results, and conclusion – all in an objective and concise manner, and within the prescri-

bed number of words. Hoogenboom and Manske (2012) described how to write a research article, characterizing the successful production of research articles as a process that anyone can master by following the guidelines suggested and avoiding common mistakes. The authors provide useful tips, such as what criteria make editors and reviewers accept manuscripts for publication and the top five reasons why they reject them. They also touch on the ethics of scholarly writing, including clear communication of findings without misleading the reader, proper citation, and avoiding plagiarism. An even broader perspective on how to write an article for successful publication was applied by Tress et al., who begin their study by arguing that “publishing is an inherent part of research; if research has not been published, it has not been completed” (2014: 17). They continue by describing all the steps of the writing process, from selecting co-authors and the target journal to how to write the article and an encouraging piece of advice that you should not give up if your manuscript is rejected.

If writing is in fact regarded as a process with a logical structure and course (which is mostly linear but may also include looping back once or twice), every step makes sense. Moreover, with practice we not only learn the skill, but also find satisfaction in it.

Because good articles are vital for a good journal, the *Urbani izziv* editorial board encourages you to submit your articles, and we will do our best to help you publish them.

I believe the articles published in this issue will give their authors satisfaction and will also offer a pleasant and educational read to our readers.

Damjana Gantar,
editor-in-chief

References

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