List of useful resources

1. Books for writers

Books on productivity


Boice, R. (1990). Professors as writers: A self-help guide to productive writing. Stillwater, Okla., U.S.A: New Forums Press. (Despite its age, still one of the most useful books on strategies for getting writing done, and one of the few with any good evidence for its claims.)

Goodson, P. (2013). Becoming an academic writer. Los Angeles: SAGE Publications (a more up-to-date revision of Boice – again, good evidence to support the author’s claims that the exercises suggested will make a difference).

Books on scientific writing


Day, R., & Gastel, B. (2012). How to write and publish a scientific paper. Cambridge University Press (One of the standard texts; not necessarily brilliant but a good grounding, and comprehensive. I think Cargill and O’Connor might be a better choice for a standard text.)


Kramer, M., & Call, W. (Eds.). (2007). Telling True Stories: A Nonfiction Writers’ Guide from the Nieman Foundation at Harvard University. New York: Plume. (Not specifically about science writing, but has an exceptional amount of advice relevant to popular science writing and, in particular, science journalism.)

Penrose, A. M., & Katz, S. B. (2010). *Writing in the sciences: Exploring conventions of scientific discourse*. Longman. (This would be my choice of a primary textbook – lots of useful exercises with a focus on the context of science)


**Books on style**


http://www.cambridge.org/es/academic/subjects/arts-theatre-culture/creative-writing/writing-well-essential-guide

**2. Articles**


http://doi.org/10.1038/embor.2013.76 (A reminder that learning how to write scientific articles by aping your supervisor’s style will perpetuate poor writing. Journal editors criticised, too.)

Dunleavy, P. (2014, July 31). Seven upgrade strategies for a problematic article or chapter [Blog post]. Retrieved from https://medium.com/advice-and-help-in-authoring-a-phd-or-nonline/seven-upgrade-strategies-for-a-problematic-article-or-chapter-3e66b81be9aa2#af97a8f8d (Sound, concrete advice.)


http://doi.org/10.1002/bmb.20329

http://doi.org/10.1038/171737a0 (One of the classic papers in modern science, and a brilliant example of clear writing on a highly technical subject.)

(A typically well-written article by an excellent science writer, Ed Yong. Here he discusses crucial aspects of science writing, using an article by Carl Zimmer as an exemplar.)

3. Useful websites for scientific writers

Wendy Belcher’s website: http://www.wendybelcher.com/writing-advice

Helen’s Sword’s website: Is your writing flabby or fit: http://writersdiet.com/?page_id=4

A student-driven blog about writing a doctorate: http://thesiswhisperer.com/

“Writing the dissertation blog”: http://patthomson.net/

Lots of helpful tips for students: http://www.phd2published.com/

A scarilily honest writing website for scholars and graduate students: http://getalifephd.blogspot.co.nz/ Mostly sound advice, although sometimes relies on less-than-authoritative evidence. Discusses how to function effectively in an academic career, with a strong focus on writing (social sciences, but widely applicable).

Athene Donald is a UK physicist who often writes about writing in science: http://occamstypewriter.org/athenedonald/

Rachael Cayley’s blog about academic writing: Explorations of style: http://explorationsofstyle.com/ (Excellent, comprehensive).

Thomas Bæsboell's blog: Research as a second language: http://secondlanguage.blogspot.com/ (Danish academic writing coach and philosopher; very definite views, but worth thinking about.)

Doctoral writing SIG: https://doctoralwriting.wordpress.com/ — excellent blog with highly useful and interesting posts by guest writers.

Research funding toolkit: http://www.researchfundingtoolkit.org/blog/ — excellent blog with a strong focus on writing grant proposals.

Writing for research: https://medium.com/@write4research/latest. Standfirst says 'Writing creative non-fiction at a research level is hard, skilled work, across all disciplines. Here Prof Patrick Dunleavy (LSE) collates some helpful resources'. Ignore the reference to 'creative non-fiction', because the blog is highly relevant for science and other academic writing, too.

For those who'd like a sound understanding of English usage, Tom Freeman's Stroppy editor blog: https://stroppyeditor.wordpress.com/ is sound and well argued. It's often entertaining, too.
4. Blogs and websites (science journalism)
Although these are not about science writing, they include examples of excellent public-facing scientific writing. I encourage my students to read these as a way of imbibing the rhythms of excellent science writing.

Carl Zimmer's column in the New York Times: Matter

Ed Yong's exemplary blog: Not exactly rocket science. Part of a 'science salon' comprising 7 blogs by excellent science writers including, among Yong and others, Carl Zimmer.

Mosaic Science — regular, well written articles about topical science subjects. Sponsored by the Wellcome Trust; has a professional editorial team. More info here.

The last word on nothing: very good blog written by a team of professional science writers. Students should be reading this kind of stuff to develop a feel for good public science writing.

An extensive series of articles and videos about (public/popular) science writing on the Guardian newspaper’s site. Note: these are about how and why to communicate science.

5. Classes/talks on science writing/presentations
An excellent presentation by Simon Peyton Jones on writing a scientific paper.
Abstract: Professor Simon Peyton Jones, Microsoft Research, gives a guest lecture on writing. Seven simple suggestions: don't wait - write, identify your key idea, tell a story, nail your contributions, put related work at the end, put your readers first, listen to your readers. Prof. Peyton Jones' lecture contained a lot of question and answer sessions with the audience. These have been removed from this video, cutting the original 50 minute lecture down to 30 minutes. (Original video here: http://research.microsoft.com/apps/video/default.aspx?id=168649)

How to give a great research talk. Also by Simon Peyton-Jones; about an hour, poor video quality but audio O.K. and supported by good slides.

Steven Pinker on stylish academic writing: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IE-TTz13P7w

Helen Sword on academic writing style: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nQsRwAVSVeM

A very long video of a class by Judy Swan, but well worth watching from beginning to end:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iLPCdDp_LE0

A TED talk by Judy Swan: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1pzjxYCwb08