

Writing Basics

Central writing principle: Write with the reader in mind

Major basic writing principles:

Principles of word choice and location:

- Words should be precise
- Words should be simple
- Words should be necessary
- Use correct terminology and nomenclature
- Place old and familiar information at the beginning of a sentence in the topic position
- Place new/important information at the end of a sentence in the stress position

Principles of sentence structure and location

- Avoid redundancies
- Use the active voice
- Use strong verbs
- Use clear pronouns
- Write short sentences

Principles of paragraph structure

- Each paragraph must be organized
- Each paragraph must be coherent
- Each paragraph must be consistent
- Establish importance: -first power position is most powerful within a paragraph
- Create continuity
 - Word/sentence location
 - Repeat key terms
 - Transitions
- Keep consistent order
- Keep a consistent point of view
- Organize result paragraphs in a repeating four-part pattern

Contact Information:

*Angelika Hofmann, Ph.D.
Instructor for Scientific Writing
Scientific Writer and Editor
Corporate and Foundation Relations, Office of Development
Yale University
angelika.hofmann@yale.edu*