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Guide for
Writing

The American Nurse

OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER OF
THE AMERICAN NURSES' ASSOCIATION

from

Patricia McCarty
Editor
(816) 474-5720 ext. 337

Suggestions for Authors Preparing Articles for The American Nurse

- Use a conversational rather than a scholarly tone.
- If you have questions about tone or style, look over a few recent issues of The American Nurse.
- Use a personal example or a little story if it will help to make your point.
- If you get stuck, talk to a friend about what you want to say and listen to yourself. Because we learned to talk before we learned to write, we can usually say it better than we can write it. And we express ourselves better to a friendly audience than to a critical one.
- If you are still stuck, call the editor. She's friendly. Her toll-free number is 800-821-5538.
- Three and a half to four pages double spaced is a good length. Typed please.
- Include brief biographical information about yourself and a black and white photo.



American Nurses' Association
2420 Pershing Road
Kansas City, MO 64108

WRITING FOR PUBLICATION - Part II

- I. INTRODUCTION/GROUP EXPECTATIONS
- II. TOPIC OVERVIEW
 - A. Purpose: To acquaint the participants with the elements of clear, concise, clinical writing
 - B. Objectives: Upon completion of this workshop, the participants will be able to:
 1. Describe the process for editing his/her own work
 2. Recognize common style errors in word usage, punctuation and manuscript format
 3. Recognize jargon and medicalese frequently found in medical literature
 4. Abstract a manuscript
 - C. Editing practice sessions
- III. EFFECT OF SPEECH PATTERNS ON WRITING
- IV. KNOWLEDGE OF GRAMMAR AND ITS RELATION TO SUCCESSFUL WRITING
- V. WHAT EDITING IS AND IS NOT
 - A. Rules of editing
 - B. Steps in revising or self-editing
- VI. EDITING FOR STRENGTH
 - A. Every word counts
 - B. Active voice
 - C. Passive constructions
 - D. Verbs are verbs
- VII. EDITING FOR CONCISENESS AND CLARITY
 - A. Pruning deadword
 - B. Sentence balance
 - C. Redundancies vs. wordiness
 - D. Straightforward vs. longwinded
 - E. Denotation vs. connotation
 - F. Abstract vs. concrete
- VIII. EDITING FOR PRECISION
 - A. Modifiers: misplaced, dangling, squinting
 - B. Shifting numbers, tenses, subjects, voice and point of view
 - C. The right word
- IX. MAKING ORDER OUT OF CHAOS
 - A. Parallelism
 - B. Orderly arrangement
- X. GETTING AND HOLDING READER'S ATTENTION
- IX. HOW TO WRITE LIKE A PROFESSIONAL

Writing for Publication - Part II

Page 2

SUGGESTED READINGS:

- Barzun, J. Simple and Direct: A Rhetoric for Writers. New York, Harper and Row, 1975.
- Bates, J.D. Writing With Precision Washington, D.C. Acropolis Books, Ltd., 1976.
- Bernstein, T. The Careful Writer. New York, Atheneum, 1975.
- Day, R.A. How to Write and Publish a Scientific Paper. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, ISI Press.
- Lynch, B.S. and C.F. Chapman. Writing for Communication in Science and Medicine. Florence, Kentucky, Litton Educational Publishing, 1980.
- Strunk, W. Jr., and E.B. White. The Elements of Style. 2nd Ed., New York, Macmillan Co., 1972.
- Style book/Editorial Manual of the AMA. American Medical Association, 1976.
- Zinsser, W. On Writing Well: An Informal Guide to Writing. New York, Harper and Row, 1976.

Parallelism-

is a device used to organize information - bring things together
Clarifies relationships
tidy up thoughts and ideas
straightens out ~~stagnant~~ ^{phrases} clauses or definitions
mixed up

use short paragraphs

use main sentence to introduce main thought

Abstract

in beginning to acquaint reader to article

formative - focus on conclusions

descriptive

research abstracts

1. state principal objectives and scope of the investigation
2. describe methodology
3. state the principal conclusion

Humming

Fog Index - gear writing to certain level of understanding
Count

"Active voice

"I rang the bell"

vs

The bell was rung

Editing for strength

* use active voice

find subject / object / verb to improve clarity

? Is object more than subject - if not reverse and put subject first

Making nouns out of strong verbs

? What is clear verb or noun

Ex. impact is not a verb

* watch out for endings ^{*}ance, tion, ization - utilization

using should - an immediate turnoff

Editing for Precision

Keep sentence elements together

Stringing ^{modifiers} ~~phrases~~ that don't clearly refer to approp. noun that it qualifies

^{phrases} Give clause it's own subject

Stringing Modifier - one that can be interpreted as modifying one or two or more elements

Editing for conciseness and clarity

Keep sentences under 20 words

Don't repeat words or ideas unnecessarily

Eliminate wordiness

Be specific Use concrete terms

avoid fancy language

Review process

concrete, concise, comprehensive

writer respon

iden. approp. audience

technical competence

identify purpose of article

professional attitude toward criticism

Editor

Has writer given all info.

" " answered who, what, why, when, where

purpose of scientific writing is to inform

connotation (emotion)

denotation

self editing

read entire manuscript before changing anything

think about components

ask if you have total picture

have you answered all 5 questions

read through applying principles of editing

pay special

tail down sentences - make one word replace several words

pruning - making decision about what is approp. to cut down

read your paper aloud - check for logic and completeness

search for "wrong words"