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## Tips for effective writing

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[Economics](#) is a general interest journal, so well written and accessible writing is key.

1. Key to your communication is a good command of English. Reading articles in this or other journals to see how others have communicated should improve your own writing. Writing with others or getting feedback from those who write well can also improve your ability to communicate. Review your grammar, check your spelling, and pay attention to punctuation. Do not forget connecting words or articles: the small words matter.
2. The writing should be interesting and engaging. This means that it should be focussed on the subject at hand, expressed clearly, and use appropriate transition sentences to link ideas across paragraphs. Paragraphs should exposit one main idea and should be well below a page long. Paragraphs should include an introductory sentence that sets out the main idea and the paragraph's purpose. The main body that explains the main idea. A concluding sentence that wraps up how the idea in the paragraph adds to the topic under discussion and transitions to the next paragraph. Write concisely.
3. Sentences should be relatively simple, expressing a single point.
4. The introduction should be brief. Readers need only know what they will read about, why it is important, the main intuition for its most important results, and a roadmap of the paper: include what you would say to explain your paper to an intelligent friend in five minutes.
5. The introduction should first state the motivation for the paper. Questions that can assist you in explaining the motivation are: What is the main contribution of your paper? What is the puzzle or unresolved issue that your work addresses? How does your contribution advance the field? What is new and how can it be used to benefit policy, theoretical understanding, or empirical methodology?
6. The introduction should next state the key issues involved in the topic and the main results. Results should be accompanied by a "bitesize" idea of why they occur. You will fill in the full details later but this thumbnail sketch should give readers an orientation to what they will be seeing later.
7. The introduction should lastly present a roadmap of the paper, with sections identified by their main role in the paper's outline (eg, section 1 will present a literature review where we will see that the main issue in the paper has not yet been fully resolved, section 2 will present the model structure, section 3...)
8. The paper should present a review of the relevant literature, emphasising only those papers that are most relevant to your topic and placing any subsidiary literature in either brief comments or footnotes. The literature review should isolate your contribution from what has gone before. It should also allow the interested reader to investigate further based on your identification of the main articles of interest. Where the review is short, it can be included in the introduction.
9. Your presentation of others' contributions should explain their main argument in a few sentences. The overall presentation of the literature should read like a "story" or a "narrative", not "reporting" or a "list". Papers should be woven together following a structure so that they form a picture of the development of knowledge around your topic.
10. Your paper should be written for non-specialists as well as specialists. This means that you should define all your notation and interpret why your model's main assumptions and structure are appropriate: do not assume that readers will know the area of your work in any detail.
11. Uninterpreted mathematics does not constitute a paper: it should be possible to read your paper without the explicit mathematics and still understand what you are doing and why. Your main equations should be included in the text, fully explained and interpreted. All the rest of the calculations should be placed in an appendix for referees to verify. Most readers will not read the appendix, however, so the paper should be possible to understand without reliance on appendix material.

12. For theoretical papers, the derivation of the results should proceed logically. Explain all steps in the order that they are needed: readers should not have to flip back and forth to understand what you are doing. Main results should be summarised in a proposition or a series of lemmas leading to a proposition. Propositions and lemmas should be written so that they are possible to understand on their own, even if the reasoning requires reading the intervening text.
13. For empirical papers, describe your identification strategy and main equations in an initial methodology section, then describe your data. It helps to present an initial look at the data using charts or graphs before going into the econometric analysis. Present your results, including not only the tables of the results but also explaining them in the text. As with the rest, it should be possible to understand your argument by reading the text only.
14. A discussion should follow the main results to explain their significance, their robustness, and extensions.
15. The conclusions should briefly recap your main arguments, highlight the most important aspects of your findings, and recognise the limitations of your work. Place your contribution into the larger context of the issue you are studying. This can include posing questions that you have not yet answered in the work, but which would form a research agenda for you or others in future.