

Syllabus: Write Effectively

Instructor: Gregory S. Patience

Textbook: Communicate Science Papers, Presentations and Posters Effectively

1. Objectives

This bootcamp develops best practices to communicate ideas efficiently and proposes guidelines to activate text. By the end of this bootcamp you will be able to:

- recognize the importance of expressing ideas;
- identify the origin of convoluted language and correct it;
- reformulate passive sentences to the active voice;
- apply logos, pathos, and ethos to present data and ideas;
- remove metadiscourse (hedging, boosting, redundant, and narcissism) appropriately;
- write meaningful abstracts, highlights, and graphical abstracts; and,
- report data according to the SI convention – significant figures and units.

2. Bootcamp format and pedagogical approach

To maximize learning outcomes

- Prior to each session, everyone will complete short assignments
- Attendees will work in groups of 4 to discuss assignments, debate concepts, and practice.
- As a whole group, we review these discussions to reinforce the principals of the bootcamp.
- The textbook, slides, and articles highlight the concepts and support the discussions

3. Assignments and grading

Activity	Day	Number	Weight, %
HM0 – Quiz, Abstract	0	1	10
HW1 – Correct sentences (precise...)	1	1	20
HW2 – Write highlights	2	1	20
HW3 – Re-write your abstract (Project)	3	1	20
Active participation	1-4	4	10
Final exam	4	1	20

4. Detailed work plan

Preparation for the course

- (1) Complete a quiz with 20 questions that gauges current writing knowledge.
- (2) By Saturday, January 27, forward a recent 250 word abstract you have written (article/project) to gregory-s.patience@polymtl.ca. We refer to this document throughout the workshop.
- (3) Read Chapter 2 of the textbook.

Day 1 (8:30-12h30) – Writing Style and the publishing industry (Chapters 1, 2)

Why do we need to write well? What are the measures of success? We discuss the five characteristics of good writing practices – precise, concise, vigorous, active and straightforward. Pathos, ethos and logos are forms of persuasion.

Day 2 (8:30-12h30) – Elements of scientific articles (Chapter 2)

Activate your text: Admit that you did it and shave with Occam's razor. Metadiscourse: when does it clutter an article – how much is too much?

Day 3 (8:30-12h30) – Practicum (Chapters 3,4,6)

Reporting experimental data according to SI. Making a graph that will reproduce in the journal. The elements of an article: Apply good writing practices to Titles, GA, HL, and Abstract.

Day 4 (8:30-12h30) – Practicum (Chapters 6, 9)

During the last day, we review the abstracts and then examine Introduction, Discussion and Conclusions. We correct the final exam as a group. If time permits, we will also look at what constitutes plagiarism.