
Writing from a Wide Perspective for an International Audience

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🕒 July 28, 2016 📁 Researchers and Scientists - How to get a Journal Article Published 👤 Rene Tetzner

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The authors of most scholarly writing produced in the English language today anticipate or at least hope for an international audience, yet not all academic and scientific authors widen their perspective and adjust their prose accordingly while preparing articles for publication in journals that appeal to readers all over the world. Neglecting this vital aspect of successful scholarship in the early twenty-first century can limit both the audience your writing reaches and the comprehension and citation of your work on the part of those readers who do encounter your text. Fortunately, there are some practical strategies that can be used to make your writing clear and accessible for an international audience of scholars and more general readers alike.

The language you use throughout your paper and especially in the initial descriptions of your research and its context should always be chosen with an international audience in mind. It is necessary, for instance, to avoid biases, which can occur in terms of race, nationality, sex/gender, class, education, age and many other factors. Sexist language must be avoided at all times, and so must the

your exact meaning to all readers. In our area and in local universities are classic examples of vague descriptions that will not convey the necessary information to your readers (particularly those from other contexts and areas) unless you first identify the area you are working in and give the location of those universities. Words and phrases that describe your research, its participants and its context with absolute precision will prove most effective and also help you avoid unintentional expressions of bias.

Conversely, your language should not be so specific to one country or region that its meaning will not be fully understood by international readers. Currency and educational systems are good examples of topics for which you should provide not only specific information relevant to the original locality, but also careful enough explanations of the specifics to make them clear to readers who are not familiar with that locality and its culture. For instance, a 'first-year student' in Britain is a 'freshman' in the United States, and while the first term is self-explanatory, the second may not be clear to readers outside of the US. It is always a good idea to use words that will be universally understood, such as 'mobile phone' instead of 'mobile' (used in Britain) or 'cell' (used in the US), or to provide a brief explanation when first using any potentially unclear or ambiguous term: you might mention, for instance, that 'petrol' in Britain is the fuel known as 'gas' or 'gasoline' in the US.

Dates recorded as numerals only can be particularly confusing in an international context: '10/11/14,' for example, is 10 November 2014 in British English, but October 11, 2014 in American English, and without further context, there is no way for readers to know which date is intended. A Roman numeral can be used for the month, as in '10.xi.14,' which eliminates the possibility of confusing day with month, or the date system established by the International Organization for Standardization can be adopted, in which case the order of the numerals would be year-month-day and the format would be '2014-11-10.' Whatever method of recording dates you choose to use, it will be most effective for your readers if you explain it briefly and apply it consistently throughout your document.

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