# Aspects of Scientific Writing: Overview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The three worst approaches to scientific writing</td>
<td>2-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A simple model of the writer</td>
<td>7-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure</td>
<td>11-34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The first sentence</td>
<td>35-38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal requirements</td>
<td>39-53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style</td>
<td>54-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The three worst approaches to scientific writing
3. "Writing is a matter of talent. You either have it or you don't."

Plain wrong. Good writers have practiced a lot and have often failed before they succeeded. Bad writers can improve their writing by studying the art (or craft) of writing, by practicing, by asking for feedback.
2. "To me, scientific texts are often difficult to understand. Hence when I write, I try to make my text difficult to understand, building super long sentences and using opaque words."

Terrible. Economics is difficult enough. Everyone should try to write as clearly as possible. If you write a paper about a subject you have understood well, then you can write in way that allows others to follow your argument easily. This is important when it comes to grading. If your text is messy and incomprehensible, your professor will assume that your understanding of the topic is equally bad.
1. "What I read is perfectly written. Hence the best I can do is copying it. This is killing two birds with one stone: I can submit a good text, and I don't have to work for it."

This is plagiarism, and it is the worst thing you can do. If detected, you will automatically get a 5, 0, or worse. Plagiarism is against the honor code of science.
General rule: Small changes of the original text that could have been done by someone not understanding it are not enough!
Example: I do not understand what Einstein is talking about. Still, I could do some changes which do not turn his text into nonsense. That still would be plagiarism.

"If the linear dimensions of a space filled with temperature radiation are very large in comparison with the wavelength corresponding to the maximum energy of the radiation at the temperature in question, then the mean energy fluctuation will obviously be very small in comparison with the mean radiation energy of that space."


"Assuming that the linear dimensions of a space which is filled with temperature radiation are very large, compared to the wavelength corresponding to the maximum energy of the radiation at the temperature in question, then the average energy fluctuation will obviously be very small in comparison with the mean radiation energy of that space."
A simple model of the writer
• Finding Ideas
• Structuring
• Writing
• Revising
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Team Member</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Finding Ideas</td>
<td>Mr. Sensitive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structuring</td>
<td>Ms. Shy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>Ms. Too Weak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revising</td>
<td>Mr. Too Often</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mein innerer Kritiker ist Workoholiker.
In a seminar paper, you are not supposed to contribute to scientific progress. But you already need own ideas, starting with the structure (outline)
Resources for writing students

Looking for relevant literature for your seminar papers? Use Google Scholar instead of Google. Note that EconBiz claims (in this PDF) paper to be superior.
Here are more links: UB EZB wiso ideas nep ScienceDirect ebsco hebis

Statistics tools
You don't have fancy statics software on your computer? In some cases, these resources help:

VassarStats - a large free collection of online tests etc.

StatPages - this is a very large link collection leading you to free and/or online statistics tools.

On writing I: Formal requirements
Plagiarism and Deception: Information for students [PDF] (english)
[German version [PDF] : Plagiat und Täuschung - Hinweise für Studierende]

In our library, we have a nice little book by Robert Neugeboren: "The Student's Guide to Writing Economics". Here is an older manuscript version [PDF] of the book for download.

A short guide on how to meet the formal requirements of seminar papers or master theses is here for download [PDF] (but please ignore the maximum number of pages indicated therein). Here [PDF] is something similar in German.

On writing II: Style
Here are some links I like:

On revising

On the writer's block (which means "Schreibblockade" in German. It happens to the best of us)

Writing Clear, Concise Sentences
Some notes on Daniel Schunk's *Guidelines for Writing a Thesis*
2. Table of contents
The table of contents indicates all elements of the thesis, except the front cover, and all chapters, sections and subsections of the main body with the section number, the section heading, and the page where the section starts. It is itself numbered with Roman numerals. Here is an example for a table of contents:
Table of contents………………………………………………………………  I
List of abbreviations…………………………………………………………..  II
List of symbols………………………………………………………………...  III
List of figures………………………………………………………………….  IV
List of tables…………………………………………………………………...  V
1. Introduction…………………………………………………………………  1
2. Heading of the second chapter……………………………………………...
   2.1 Heading of the first section of the second chapter.....................  5
   2.2 Heading of the second section of the second chapter................... 7
3. Heading of the third chapter…………………………………………........ 10
4. Conclusion……………………………………………………………. …….  12
References………………………………………………………………. ….....  16
Appendix……………………………………………..……………………. ……17
2. Table of contents
The table of contents indicates all elements of the thesis, except the front cover, and all chapters, sections, and subsections of the main body with the section number, the section heading, and the page where the section starts. It is itself numbered with Roman numerals. Here is an example for a table of contents:

Table of contents.................................................................................................................. I
List of abbreviations…optional!............................................................................................. II
List of symbols………optional!.............................................................................................. III
List of figures…………optional!............................................................................................ IV
List of tables……..optional!................................................................................................. V
1. Introduction......................................................................................................................... 1

2. Heading of the second chapter............................................................................................
   2.1 Heading of the first section of the second chapter.................................................... 5
   2.2 Heading of the second section of the second chapter............................................. 7
3. Heading of the third chapter............................................................................................... 10
4. Conclusion.......................................................................................................................... 12
References............................................................................................................................... 16
Appendix............................................................................................................................... 17
Bad structure
(If you have a section x.1, you always need x.2)

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abalone_Dots

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prediction_market
How to structure a scientific paper
(Excerpts from a course material*) by [the chair of] Prof. Uschi Backes-Gellner, University of Zurich)

Step 1: Find your research question:
• Specify the area of your research
• Take a look at the *Journal of Economic Literature* or the *Journal of Economic Perspectives*
• Do extensive literature research
• Narrow your field to a very precise question
• Assure that you have or can find adequate data

→ In a bachelor seminar (and in most master seminars) this is done for you by the person in charge of the seminar.

*) http://www.business.uzh.ch/professorships/emap/teaching/courses/archive/Spring-Term-2011/meseminar.html
Step 1 (cont'd):

• Start with a recent and possibly well cited paper.
• Try to find papers by going through the citations of your first paper.
• Try to figure out who is citing your first paper via google scholar or similar resources.
• Try to focus. Not every paper you read should be cited in your own work.
• Create a sheet with short descriptions of the relevant papers.
• The description should contain the drawbacks and open question of the papers
• Many papers have suggestions for further research
• Pose a very specific research question and hypothesis
• Good question:
  • What is the income effect of one school year?
  • Does union membership reduce the probability of becoming unemployed?
• Bad question:
  • Do human capital investments lead to more productivity?
  • Do employment organization influence labour market outcomes?
• Specific question often lead to general insights.
Structure (Classical empirical paper)

- Abstract
- Introduction
- Theory
- Methods
- Data
- Results
- Conclusion
Abstract (→ not required in most seminars)
• Very brief
• Research question or aim of the paper
• Results
• Contribution
Introduction
(This is almost always the title of section 1 - no need to become creative in this respect)
Note: The grey items are relevant mainly for research, not for seminar papers
• Define the territory and the research question
• Define the niche
• Occupy the niche
• Describe the results
• (Contributions)
• Description of the paper's structure
Introduction
(This is almost always the title of section 1 - no need to become creative in this respect)

• Define the territory and the research question
  – In the past decade...
  – Researchers have investigated...
  – Many empirical studies discovered...

• Define the niche
• Occupy the niche
• Describe the results
• (Contributions)
• Description of the paper's structure
More on the research question / paper intro later!
Introduction
(This is almost always the title of section 1 - no need to become creative in this respect)

- Define the territory
- Define the niche
  - Despite this...
  - However, there is no evidence for...
- Occupy the niche
- Describe the results
- (Contributions)
- Description of the paper's structure
Introduction
(This is almost always the title of section 1 - no need to become creative in this respect)

• Define the territory
• Define the niche
• Occupy the niche
  – The purpose of this paper is to analyze…
  – This article presents…
  – This paper investigates…
  – This article examines….

• Describe the results
• (Contributions)
• Description of the paper’s structure
Introduction
(This is almost always the title of section 1 - no need to become creative in this respect)

• Define the territory
• Define the niche
• Occupy the niche
• Describe the results
  – This paper finds…
  – I show that… *)

• (Contributions)
• Description of the paper's structure

*) Attention! You might encounter professors who still do not like to see the "I", though nowadays this is common practice in research
Introduction
(This is almost always the title of section 1 - no need to become creative in this respect)

• Define the territory
• Define the niche
• Occupy the niche
• Describe the results
• (Contributions)
  – Our paper contributes to the literature on... by investigating
  – This paper helps to understand...
  – Our results suggest that...
• Description of the paper's structure
Introduction
(This is almost always the title of section 1 - no need to become creative in this respect)

• Define the territory
• Define the niche
• Occupy the niche
• Describe the results
• (Contributions)
• Description of the paper's structure
  - Section II describes the theory and section III the methods. Section IV [one sentence] ... and section VI concludes.
Theory
How do we obtain the hypotheses we want to test?
• Formal economic theory
• Intuitive discussion about answering the question
Methods...
might be description of
• statistical test
• experimental design
→ Not always necessary in seminar papers
Data

If you collected your own data (in an experiment for example) or compiled your own data set (from sources like World Bank or Statistisches Bundesamt), the data set should be described in a separate section like in most research papers. (Otherwise remarks on the data used by studies that you describe are necessary as well, but they so not require a separate section.)
Results - research paper

- Present your results in detail
- Assign standard errors, t-values, R-squared and number of observations
- Start with simple specifications
- The main variables first than add controls
- First OLS than IV or other advanced stuff
- Discuss the differences between the results
- Interpret the results carefully
- Take care that the effects of control variables make sense
- Economic vs statistical significance
- Compare your results to former literature
Results - seminar paper

- Graphs and tables are useful, but you must explain them in your text
- Consider shortening tables
- Discuss differences between different researchers' results
- Interpret the results carefully
- Economic vs statistical significance
Conclusion

• Summarize your results but do not copy the introduction
• Interpret your results and discuss the consequences
• Discuss your limitations
• Give further research suggestions
The first sentence
Imagine for a moment that you are the manager of a day-care center. (Levitt and Dubner, 2005, p. 19)

Suppose you are the manager of a day-care center for young children. (Gneezy and Rustichini, 2000, p. 1)

Despite an explosion of policy interest in association with recent events, religious intensity appears poorly understood. What causes religious intensity? Does economic distress stimulate religious intensity? (Chen, 2010, p. 300)

In a cross section of countries, government regulation is strongly negatively correlated with trust. (Aghion, Algan, Cahuc and Shleifer, 2010, p. 1015)

One of the biggest risks in life is the family one is born into. (Farhi and Werning, 2010, p. 635)
Four techniques for the first sentence(s)

Imagine for a moment that you are the manager of a day-care center. (Levitt and Dubner, 2005, p. 19)  
putting the reader into the shoes of a relevant decision maker

Suppose you are the manager of a day-care center for young children. (Gneezy and Rustichini, 2000, p. 1)  
Directly asking an interesting question

Despite an explosion of policy interest in association with recent events, religious intensity appears poorly understood. What causes religious intensity? Does economic distress stimulate religious intensity? (Chen, 2010, p. 300)  
statement an interesting fact that demands an explanation

In a cross section of countries, government regulation is strongly negatively correlated with trust. (Aghion, Algan, Cahuc and Shleifer, 2010, p. 1015)  
expressing a well-known fact in an original way

One of the biggest risks in life is the family one is born into. (Farhi and Werning, 2010, p. 635)
Four techniques for the first sentence(s)

Which ones are suitable for a seminar paper?

Directly asking an interesting question and stating an interesting fact that demands an explanation can be applied without problems. Expressing a well-known fact in an original way is nice if - and only if! - it does not appear artificial. Putting the reader into the shoes of a relevant decision maker is risky in a seminar paper, where you should avoid a pedagogical tone.
Writing: Formal requirements
Some notes on Daniel Schunk's Guidelines for Writing a Thesis (cont'd)
Scope of the thesis
A typical diploma thesis contains max. 40 pages (bachelor thesis 20 pages, master thesis 40 pages). This number refers only to the main body of the thesis, excluding the front cover, tables of content, appendices, references and the appendix. Large figures or tables in the main body do not count either, so if you include many figures, your diploma thesis may well exceed 40 pages. Choose font Times New Roman, font size 12pt, line spacing 1,5. For footnotes, choose font size 10pt, single-spaced. Set margins to 2.5 cm at the right, left, top and bottom. Please use justification and print the thesis one-sided.

BF: For my own master and bachelor theses, I currently do not have a maximum number of papers. However, seminar papers should be no longer than 10 pages, +/- 2 and not counting tables and figures.
Content
The main body of the thesis starts with an introduction which motivates the topic and points out its relevance. It gives a preview of the main insights, and briefly outlines the structure of the thesis. The subsequent chapters and sections present and discuss the main arguments in a logical and consistent order. The conclusion summarizes the key results. It gives a critical assessment of the content of the thesis and an outlook.
Referencing: Schunk's example

**Journal articles**


That's o.k., of course, but here I use a slightly different style:


Note that it is important to be consistent!
Journal articles in the list of references. What you always have to do:

First author's last name first. The list of references is alphabetically ordered (but not necessarily the list of a journal article's authors!)


In the list of references, always name all authors, even if they are many
Typically, you find all you need for referencing on a journal paper's first page.

Anyone Up for Helping the Fisherman’s Wife? More Solidarity with Accidental Misery than with Man-Made Misery*

By Björn Frank, Sha Li, Stephan Meisenzahl, Heike Minich, Nina Muraro, Marco de Pinto, Duncan Roth, Christoph Saenger, and Nils Saniter

Abstract

We experimentally examine the willingness to donate depending on whether “misery” has been randomly generated or self-inflicted by too high demands in bilateral negotiations. We find that randomness has a positive influence on the total amount of the donation. In the case of self-inflicted “misery” all participants who received this type of misery donated less.
Journal articles in the list of references. Some options:

You can abbreviate the first names or not

Here you can use a comma or a colon or a period


Second to last author: First name first or not

In addition to the volume number, you can give the issue number or not

However, you need to be consistent! Using different styles of referencing within one list looks very sloppy!
Book in the list of references

Only some books have a subtitle; it is often helpful to include it


Place of publication

In addition, often the publisher is given

Again, you need to be consistent! Using different styles of referencing within one list looks very sloppy!
There are various kinds of internet sources. Least suspicious, in fact perfectly okay, are discussion papers. This is how I would refer to the one on the left:


However, always check whether the same paper has become a proper journal publication in the meantime!
Referencing within the paper

There is one point where Schunk requires more consistency than necessary:

You may quote within the text (Melitz, 2003) or in footnotes¹, but be consistent throughout the thesis. If you make use of footnotes, number them consecutively throughout your thesis with superscript Arabic numerals. If you cite work by more than two authors use the first author followed by “et al.” (Blum et al. 2011).

¹ Melitz (2003).

In the scientific literature, you often find plain references in the text, but also in footnotes if some additional explanation or digression is added. That is recommended also for seminar papers.
We also find that women and older subjects on average report significantly lower production outputs than men and younger subjects, respectively. These effects are also robust when controlling for the other variables (models (2) and (3)). Moreover, when pooling the data of all three treatments we see that women report a production output of zero significantly more often than men ($x^2$-test; $p = .019$, two-sided). Recall that reporting a zero is a strong indicator of honesty since it results in a payoff of zero. There is an ongoing discussion on whether women tend to lie less than men when payoffs are at stake. Some studies support the notion of the less lying female gender (Dreber & Johannesson, 2008; Ellingsen, Johannesson, Lilja, & Zetterqvist, 2009; Pruckner & Sausgruber, 2008; Ross & Robertson, 2000). However, results from these studies do not always turn out to be significant and there are also studies which endorse that women lie more than men (Tyler & Feldman, 2004; Tyler, Feldman, & Reichert, 2006) or that there are no differences in lying behavior among genders (Belot & Schröder, 2012; Cadsby et al., 2010; DePaulo, Kashy, Kirkendol, Wyer, & Epstein, 1996; Lewis, 1993; Rowatt, Cunningham, & Druen, 1998). Our study is in line with the first stream of literature. 

Showing that age is negatively correlated with reported production outputs confirms previous findings in the relationship between age and lying behavior (i.e., see Ross & Robertson, 2000). Given the small variance in age in our student sample ($SD = 4.9$) we do not want to overemphasize this result but we consider it quite interesting that the standard result can already be confirmed with our data.

To check for the influence of the Big-Five personality factors we included four of the five factors into our model. Scale reliability is acceptable for Extraversion (Cronbach's $\alpha = .69$), Conscientiousness (.475), Neuroticism (.587), and Openness (.559). For Agreeableness scale reliability is unacceptably low (.107); therefore, we refrain from using this factor in our analysis. Model (3) shows that when controlling for Treatment, Female, and Age, Extraversion and Neuroticism positively predict reported production outputs. Our findings support previous results that extravert individuals – who are seen as gregarious, assertive, active, self-conscious, and excitement seeking and who like to participate in social interactions – are more inclined to tell lies than introvert persons (Kashy & DePaulo, 1996; Rowatt et al., 1998). There might also be lies born out of insecurity; people who have low self-consciousness and who are anxious may also choose to lie to appear more compliant and more motivated (c.f. Buss & Briggs, 1984; Kashy & DePaulo, 1996) – this inclination might be especially enhanced when those people can disguise their lies. We find support for this conjecture: Subjects scoring high in the Neuroticism domain report higher production outputs.

We conclude that team incentives really matter for honest conduct. Individual difference variables are also correlated with subjects' inclination to lie.

5. Concluding remarks

We investigate the influence of two widespread compensation schemes on agents' inclination to lie. By employing a simple experimental design introduced by Fischbacher and Heusi (2008) and controlling for individual difference variables

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7 The behavior of the player with individual compensation in Team-Mixed offers another valuable insight: One might argue that subjects have a minimum earnings goal that they want to reach by over-reporting production outputs and since the marginal gain from lying in Team is only half of that in individual cheating might be higher in Team. To test this claim we compare the reported production outputs of players with individual compensation from Team-Mixed (marginal gain equal to $\frac{1}{2}$) with these from Individual (marginal gain equal to $1$). Note that in both treatments players cannot diffuse their responsibility, i.e., they do not benefit from another player’s production output. We find that players with individual compensation from Team-Mixed (3.36) do not report significantly higher outputs than those from Individual (3.31) [MWU test: $p = .995$, two-sided]. This is remarkable given the fact that players with individual compensation from Team-Mixed even have an excuse to over-report because another player would benefit from their lies. Thus, the motive of a minimum earnings goal seems not to play a decisive role.

8 Rammstedt and John (2007) themselves point to a noticeable and substantial loss in reliability and validity in their 2-item Agreeableness scale as compared to larger Big-Five personality measures like, e.g., NEO-PI-R or BFI-44 (see Rammstedt & John, 2007, p. 219).
of all government employees who are convicted of bribery in the respective area. However, our approach differs from this study in that no such heroic proxy variables for corruption, probability of detection and severity of punishment are used; our test is straightforward: Whereas in one treatment corrupt subjects can be detected and punished (‘risk treatment’), any level of corruption goes undetected in the other (‘non-risk treatment’). According to hypothesis 1, we should observe a lower degree of corruptibility in the risk treatment than in the nonrisk treatment.

Alternatively, it has recently been suggested that economic incentives might crowd out intrinsic motivation. For example, Frey and Oberholzer-Gee (1997) found that people’s inclination to accept a nuclear waste repository decreased when they were offered a financial compensation. Here “civic duty” (p. 748) is crowded out by positive incentives. Gneezy and Rustichini (2000) found in an IQ test that those subjects who get no reward at all perform better than those with a small reward (but worse than subjects with a sufficiently high reward). Many other examples are documented (cf. Frey and Jegen, 2001).

Applying this line of reasoning to our case, we would expect the introduction of monitoring to crowd out the intrinsic motivation to reject bribes. Monitoring reveals that the principal no longer trusts the agent. Then, at least for halfhearted monitoring, its negative effects might outweigh any positive effects. In other words: Hypothesis 2: The introduction of monitoring reduces honesty.

Note that, unlike Frey and Oberholzer-Gee (1997) or Gneezy and Rustichini (2000), the factor destroying the intrinsic motivation is not a fixed payment but the possibility of being monitored, i.e. a stochastic event. So far it is mainly anecdotal...

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7 This is not counterintuitive as one might think at first: “If a person derives intrinsic benefits simply by behaving in an altruistic manner or by living up to her civic duty, paying her for this service reduces her option of indulging in altruistic feelings”. Frey and Oberholzer-Gee (1997), p. 746–7. See also Frey (1997).

8 In the public good experiment by Andreoni (1993) voluntary contributions to a public good are crowded out through taxation earmarked for the same public good. Note however that this kind of crowding out need not necessarily change the motivation towards contributing to the public good as people realize that they contribute to the same good, however through different channels.
Referencing within the paper

Refer to specific pages (or sections) whenever it makes sense. Here is an example from a paper I have written (Frank, 2012, p.318):

[E]conomists, when writing research papers, inevitably use rhetoric devices like metaphors (Klamer and Leonard 1994), but, as argued by McCloskey (1998, p. 5), they need not be aware of doing so, just like birds can fly without understanding aviation.

Klamer and Leonard (1994) is an entire paper about metaphors, hence I did not refer to any single pages. McCloskey (1998) is a book, however, and the argument I refer to is on p.5 only, thus I tell the reader.

Writing: Style
Bad advice you might have heard:
a) Vary terms
O.k., if "Mann–Whitney U test" appears three times in three consecutive sentences, you might consider a pronoun (it, this). However, do repeat terms if you feel that otherwise lose clarity.
Example:
"People high in neuroticism responded slower than people low in the tendency to experience aversive affective states."
Much better of course (Silvia 2007, p.62):
"People high in neuroticism responded slower than people low in neuroticism."
Bad advice you might have heard:
b) Avoid "I"

In many excellent journals, you find sentences like "I will show that..." or "I recruited participants from...". Attention, however: A minority of professors still require papers to be free of any "I". Unfortunately, that leads to strange things like the majestic plural (pluralis majestatis), i.e., a single author talking of "we", or passive constructions like "it will be shown that...", or worse.
Economical Writing by Deirdre McCloskey

1. Write simple, direct sentences whenever possible.
   Absolutely no one is impressed by a sentence they cannot understand. The quality of your economic logic is what counts, not big words or complicated sentences.
   "Unkompliziertheit ist nicht Einfalt, sondern Klarheit." (Anni Albers)

2. Rewrite and edit your first draft—and your second one, too.
   Easy writing makes difficult reading. Revise your words if you want others to read them.
3. If it's possible to cut out a word (or sentence), cut it out.

Cut material no matter how brilliant you consider it, if it does not advance the topic of your paper.
6. Use active verbs rather than passive ones to add life to your writing.
How to detect passive construction?
Douglas (2015, p.37) proposes the zombie test: Insert "by zombies" after the verb, and if the sentence still makes (some) sense, then it is a passively constructed sentence.
6. Use active verbs rather than passive ones to add life to your writing.

Exception to this rule:
Use passive construction when the actor performing the action is unknown or less important than the outcome you're describing

Discuss the supply and demand for gasoline, rather than the supply and demand for good X.
8. Do not use a lot of different words to express the same idea just for the sake of variety.

It is far better to repeat a word than to use synonyms and confuse your reader. Repetition of important terms adds cohesion to your writing.

9. Minimize use of doublets.

Doublets are two words that mean essentially the same thing, used alongside each other in a sentence. Using the same ideas or phrases when a single or solitary one would do is a certain and sure-fire way of writing an unreadable and confusing report. Pick the best word and use it; do not say everything twice.

10. Avoid excessive use of This, That, These and Those.

In most cases "the" will do nicely. Instead of saying "this," try repeating the word it represents instead.
On my homepage you find a link to the University of Wisconsin's Writing Center and its hints on "How to Write Clear, Concise, and Direct Sentences".

Here is an important point:

**2. Put the action of the sentence in the verb.** Don't bury it in a noun or blur it across the entire sentence.

a. An evaluation of the procedures needs to be done.
   (better:)

b. The procedures need to be evaluated.

c. We need to evaluate the procedures.
The problem is much worse in German.

"Das Schiff ging nach einer ruhigen Fahrt, die zu den schönsten Inseln in der Karibik führte, verbunden mit wundervollen Tauchgängen in die farbenprächtige Welt exotischer Fauna, unerwartet am 15. Tag der Expedition unter."

"In einer seit 1989 jährlich von der APEC (Französischer Verband für die Beschäftigung von Führungskräften) durchgeführten internationalen Umfrage werden Stand und Entwicklung der Führungskräfte in Belgien, Deutschland, Frankreich, Großbritannien, Italien, Luxemburg, den Niederlanden und Spanien geschätzt."

"Whenever the literary German dives into a sentence, that is the last you are going to see of him till he emerges on the other side of his Atlantic with his verb in his mouth." Mark Twain

[Verbesserungsvorschlag für das letzte Beispiel: Die APEC (Französischer Verband für die Beschäftigung von Führungskräften) schätzt die Zahl der Führungskräfte seit 1989 auf der Grundlage einer jährlichen internationalen Umfrage in Belgien, Deutschland, Frankreich, Großbritannien, Italien, Luxemburg, den Niederlanden und Spanien.]
2. Put the action of the sentence in the verb (cont'd)
Don't bury it in a noun. Watch out especially for nominalizations (verbs that have been made into nouns by the addition of -tion).

d. The stability and quality of our financial performance will be developed through the profitable execution of our existing business, as well as the acquisition or development of new businesses.
(better:)
e. .... Your turn
2. **Put the action of the sentence in the verb (cont'd)**

Don't bury it in a noun. Watch out especially for nominalizations (verbs that have been made into nouns by the addition of -tion).

d. The stability and quality of our financial performance will be developed through the profitable execution of our existing business, as well as the acquisition or development of new businesses.

(better:)

e. We will improve our financial performance not only by executing our existing business more profitably but by acquiring or developing new businesses.
Again, that is a typical problem also in German.


Too many short sentences can hurt an essay. It can make the writing seem choppy. The writing may seem like it is below college level. Readers may lose interest. They may not want to continue reading.

(better:)

Too many short sentences can hurt an essay, for it can make the writing seem choppy and seem like it is below college level. Because of this, readers may lose interest and may not want to continue reading.
Long sentences are also problematic in writing because, even if they are punctuated properly, they can be hard to read since readers often want a pause, and writers need to be aware of this and consider the effect that any writing has on the reader. Writing that contains long sentences can seem wordy, even if this isn’t the case, for the information in long sentences, like in short ones, can be hard to understand and connect.

(better:)

Long sentences are also problematic in writing. This is true even if they are punctuated properly since they can be hard to understand for readers, who often want a pause while reading. Writers need to be aware of this and consider the effect that any writing has on the reader. Furthermore, writing that contains long sentences can seem wordy, even if this isn’t the case. This happens because the information in long sentences, like in short ones, can be hard to understand and connect.
In order to establish a relationship between document length and level of bureaucracy in European countries and to confirm whether documents, such as reports regarding legislative and administrative issues, vary substantially in length from one language to another, we conducted an analysis of A, B and C.

(better:)

... Your turn
In order to establish a relationship between document length and level of bureaucracy in European countries and to confirm whether documents, such as reports regarding legislative and administrative issues, vary substantially in length from one language to another, we conducted an analysis of A, B and C.

(better:)
We conducted an analysis of A, B and C. This was done in order to establish a relationship between document length and level of bureaucracy. We wanted to confirm whether or not documents, such as reports regarding legislative and administrative issues, vary substantially in length from one language to another.
"I am still learning how to write. I have never looked over any of my papers without finding ways to improve it, even though I am accounted a good writer and do many drafts. So do not be surprised when you read my published papers and find violations of my own rule."

Eric Rasmusen


Deirdre McCloskey recommends (in Economical Writing: An Executive Summary): Thomas Schelling, Robert Solow.

I recommend: Giacomo Corneo, Colin Camerer.

HELLO, CECILIA!

I'M THE MANUSCRIPT YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE WRITING. HOW'S IT GOING?

UH, GOOD?

I FEEL YOU'VE BEEN IGNORING OUR RELATIONSHIP.

I'M BUSY!
YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE WRITING ME.

I KNOW!

LET ME JUST TAKE CARE OF THIS ONE THING FIRST.

FINE.

I'M STILL HERE.

I KNOW!
OK! I'M READY TO START WRITING!

WHAT?

I DON'T FEEL LIKE IT ANY MORE.

BUT... YOU CAN'T...

WRITER'S BLOCK.

AAHHHHH!!!

www.phdcomics.com
Aus: Svantesson (1993)
The following screen shot is from FreeMind, a free mind mapping software you might wish to try out:
http://freemind.sourceforge.net/wiki/index.php/Main_Page