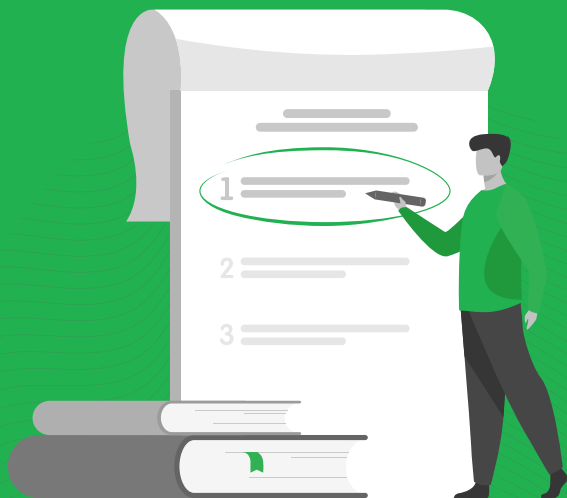


Zoltán Sárkány

Scientific Writing Tips
for Beginners

Structure and Clarity



About this guide

Writing a scientific paper is about building a clear, logical argument your readers can follow. If you're just starting out, writing can feel overwhelming. What should come first? How much information is enough? Is your message clear?

This free guide offers 10 practical tips to improve the structure, clarity, and flow of your manuscript. They are based on the same principles I use when helping researchers turn complex drafts into clear, compelling papers.

Whether you're working on your first article or want to improve the next one, these tips are a great place to start.

This guide is also available at zoltansarkany.com/writing-tips.

About me

My name is Zoltán Sárkány, I am a freelance medical editor. I help researchers and academics improve the clarity, coherence, and impact of their writing.

Find out more on zoltansarkany.com

1 Start with a clear research aim and keep it in sight

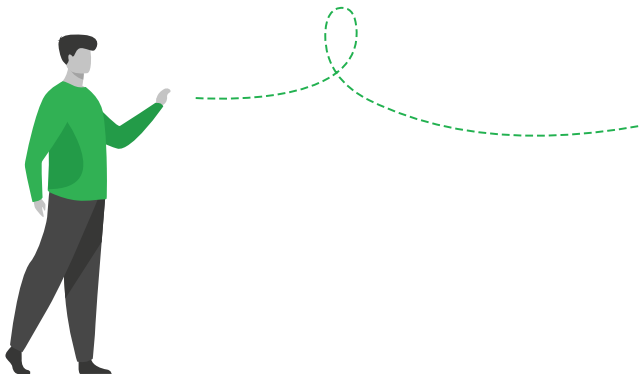
Everything in your paper should serve one purpose: answering your research question. Define this clearly before you begin, and revisit it as you write, because it gives your paper direction and focus. Without a clear aim, you risk writing an unfocused introduction, a scattered discussion, and a mismatched conclusion. A well-defined aim helps you decide what to include, what to leave out, and how to stay relevant. State it in the introduction, return to it in the discussion, and use it as a guide throughout.

2 Create a detailed outline before you start writing

Writing without a plan is like building without a blueprint. Start with a structured outline of your manuscript: main sections first (Introduction, Methods, Results, Discussion), then fill in the key points within each. Once the framework is in place, you can progressively add smaller details and refine your arguments. An outline helps you stay organized, write more efficiently, and identify gaps or redundancies in your reasoning.

3 Follow a logical sequence

A well-structured paper doesn't just list facts — it tells a story. In the Introduction, guide the reader from what is known, to what is still unknown, to how your research fills that gap. In the Discussion, mirror this logic by interpreting your results, linking them back to the research gap, and explaining how they contribute to the field. If the sequence is unclear or the gap is poorly defined, even strong results may lose their impact.



4 Organize each paragraph around one clear idea

Each paragraph should focus on a single, well-defined idea. Start with a sentence that introduces that idea, then use the rest of the paragraph to support or explain it. Avoid mixing unrelated topics, as this weakens the message and confuses the reader. If a paragraph starts with the study population and ends with the methodology, it's probably doing too much. Stick to one topic per paragraph and break up long blocks of text to keep your writing clear and easy to follow.

5 Use topic sentences to guide your reader

A topic sentence, typically the first sentence of a paragraph, signals what the paragraph will discuss. It helps your writing flow more smoothly and makes your argument easier to follow. Instead of starting with data, try a sentence like "This result supports the hypothesis that X is associated with Y", then explain it. Clear topic sentences also help readers quickly understand your main points, especially if they're skimming.

6 Avoid jumping between unrelated ideas

Even if your paragraphs are clear, your paper can feel disjointed without good flow. Use transitions like "In contrast," "Furthermore," or "As a result," to guide the reader and show how ideas are connected. At a larger scale, use short summary sentences or bridging statements to connect different sections. These transitions help maintain logical flow and make the paper easier to follow.



7 Write with the reader in mind

Your readers may not be as familiar with the topic as you are. Aim for clarity, not complexity. Define field-specific terms when you first mention them, and avoid overloading sentences with too many ideas. A helpful rule: if a sentence is hard to read aloud in one breath, it may be too long. Think of yourself as a guide: your role is to make your research understandable and relevant.

8 Be precise

Avoid vague expressions like “some studies,” “a significant change,” or “this might suggest.” Instead, be specific: name the studies, quantify results, and explain clearly. For example, “a 15% increase in response rate ($p = 0.02$)” is much more informative than “a significant improvement”. Precision strengthens your message and helps build trust in your work.

9 Make sure your conclusions follow from your results

The Discussion section is where many papers lose focus. Stick to what your data supports. Interpret results and discuss implications, but always link them back to your findings. Avoid overstatements or claiming to “prove” something unless fully justified. If you speculate, say so clearly and explain why. Reviewers and readers value honest, grounded conclusions.

10 Revise for flow and coherence

Once your draft is done, step back and look at the big picture. Does the paper tell a coherent story? Do sections flow logically? Reading your work aloud can reveal unclear transitions or awkward phrasing. If possible, take a break before revising or ask someone else to read it. Fresh eyes can help identify problems you’ve missed. Clarity and coherence are what turn a paper from acceptable into compelling.

Need help with your writing?

If you're finding it hard to organize your ideas or if your draft just doesn't "flow", you're not alone.

I work with researchers like you to improve structure, clarity, and logical flow, so your work speaks for itself.

Let's make your draft clearer and stronger. I offer professional editing and writing support tailored to your goals.

Get in touch at hello@zoltansarkany.com.