

SILVIA M. ROGERS

# **MASTERING SCIENTIFIC AND MEDICAL WRITING**

A SELF-HELP GUIDE

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 Springer

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Silvia M. Rogers, BSc, PhD, is the founder and owner of MEDIWRITE, a successful small company in Basel, Switzerland. She trained at the University of Liverpool, UK, in the Department of Pharmacology and Therapeutics headed by Professor Sir Alasdair Breckenridge. Before forming MEDIWRITE in 1994, she gained extensive experience in key areas of pharmaceutical research, including project management in a major pharmaceutical company. She is an active member of the American Medical Writers Association (AMWA) and the European Medical Writers Association (EMWA). She lectures on scientific writing at the University of Basel and has provided extensive training in various aspects of medical and scientific writing and presentation. She has written numerous expert reports, regulatory documents, scientific publications, and study reports for clients.

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## PREFACE

“If any man wish to write in a clear style,  
let him first be clear in his thoughts.”

*Johann Wolfgang von Goethe*

You may ask why anyone would want to write yet another book about scientific writing. There are many books on the subject, some more useful than others, and the abundance of literature on this topic may confuse rather than guide.

I felt that this book was necessary for several reasons. During the past years, I have learnt much about the needs of scientific communicators, both through my personal experience as a pharmacologist and, later, through teaching scientific writing at universities, pharmaceutical companies, and other institutions. In today’s busy world, guidance on scientific writing must be focused and to the point. Our constraints no longer permit the time-consuming search for the “correct” word or formulation. Moreover, the speed by which we produce a manuscript has become increasingly important, be it in academia or the pharmaceutical industry. Scientists often find it difficult to accept that their professional success essentially depends on their skill and efficiency to communicate their research results. Without any doubt, the rapid exchange of pertinent information is critical to scientific advancement and should therefore be regarded with due respect.

A second, perhaps even more important reason for writing this book is my personal concern for everyone challenged to write high-quality texts in a language that is not his or her native tongue. As a Swiss-Anglo hybrid (as I like to call myself), I sympathize with their special circumstances and wish to make a contribution to overcoming linguistic dilemmas.

In short, this book deals with clear, unambiguous language within and across the biological and medical sciences. Unlike textbooks on English grammar that analyze and prescribe the use of the language in its various forms, this book tells you how to apply your existing language skills to scientific

communication. If you do not only want to write but want to write *well*, this book is for you.

I have used a number of symbols to draw your attention to definitions or rules, examples of the principles stated, or exercises on the subject. This table shows the symbols:

SYMBOL	... AND WHAT IT MEANS
!	Definition or rule
•	Example
>	Exercise