Writing Empirical Articles: Transparency, Reproducibility, Clarity, and Memorability

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Abstract
This article provides recommendations for writing empirical journal articles that enable transparency, reproducibility, clarity, and memorability. Recommendations for transparency include preregistering methods, hypotheses, and analyses; submitting registered reports; distinguishing confirmation from exploration; and showing your warts. Recommendations for reproducibility include documenting methods and results fully and cohesively, by taking advantage of open-science tools, and citing sources responsibly. Recommendations for clarity include writing short paragraphs, composed of short sentences; writing comprehensive abstracts; and seeking feedback from a naive audience. Recommendations for memorability include writing narratively; embracing the hourglass shape of empirical articles; beginning articles with a hook; and synthesizing, rather than Mad Libbing, previous literature.

Begin with a hook paragraph

Journal editors advise that articles "should offer a clear, direct, and compelling story that first hooks the reader" (Ragins, 2012, p. 497). For example, Oyserman et al. (2017) began their article with the following hook, which led directly to a statement articulating what their article was about (illustrated here in italics):

> Will you be going to that networking lunch? Will you be tempted by a donut at 4 pm? Will you be doing homework at 9 pm? If, like many people, your responses are based on your gut sense of who you are— shy or outgoing, a treat lover or a dieter, studious or a procrastinator—you made *three assumptions about identity: that motivation and behavior are identity based, that identities are chronically on the mind, and that identities are stable.* (p. 139)

Newman et al. (2014) began their article with the following hook:

> In its classic piece, "Clinton Deploys Vowels to Bosnia," the satirical newspaper *The Onion* quoted Trszg Grzdnjkln, 44. "I have six children and none of them has a name that is understandable to me or to anyone else. Mr. Clinton, please send my poor, wretched family just one 'E.' Please." *The Onion* was onto something when it suggested that *people with hard to pronounce names suffer while their more pronounceable counterparts benefit.* (p. 1, italics added)

Jakimik and Glenberg (1990) began their article with the following hook:

> You're zipping through an article in your favorite journal when your reading stops with a thud. The author has just laid out two alternative hypotheses and then referred to one of them as "the former approach." But now you are confused about which was first, which was second. You curse the author and your own lack of concentration, reread the set-up rehearsing the order of the two hypotheses, and finally figure out which alternative the author was referring to. We have experienced this problem, too, and we do not think that it is simply a matter of lack of concentration. *The subject of this article is the reason for difficulty with referring devices such as "the former approach."* (p. 582, italics added)