Fake News, Real Science Writing 101
A. Malcolm Campbell

Tips for Term Paper

rules before you start

A. Understand the material before writing.
B. Have something to say.
C. Know who your target audience is.
D. The value of science writing is based on its usefulness.

1. structure

- title
  - identifies the focus of the paper
  - avoids generic statements
  - short and active titles good
  - can follow "subject: specific focus" format
- authorship
  - full name
  - course name, year, institution
- introduction 1 – 3 paragraphs
  - issue is topic sentence/s = focus of paper; end with characters and their actions
  - citations = (name *et al.*, year) format in text
- results many paragraphs
  - contains the argument
  - development = steps that lead to conclusion; give examples or expert opinions; if issue is a question, development is the answer
  - contains figures (tight fit) with legends (not in text boxes) and attribution (maybe original art too?)
  - contains tables with titles and attribution (maybe original art too?)
  - citations = (name *et al.*, year) format in text
- discussion paragraphs, fewer paragraphs than results
  - synthesizes the argument
  - debunks data-less arguments
  - close with take home message
  - speculation and additional questions permitted
  - final sentence in the last paragraph that provides closure
  - citations = (name *et al.*, year) format in text
- references, a list
  - include sources you cite must be called out (name, year) in the paper
  - use format provided from reading schedule

2. **organization of paragraphs**
    - chronological: sequence of related events
    - general to specific: start with the familiar big picture, zoom to new details
        - discussion inverts from specific to general
    - increasing importance: most persuasive data last
    - problem to solution: introduction posed problem, results posits solution
3. **transition words**
    - placed at beginning of sentence
    - placed at beginning of paragraph
        - chronology (first, finally, thus, to conclude, to summarize, after, then, etc.)
        - general to specific (for example, specifically, so, therefore, thus, namely, etc.)
        - increasing importance (clearly, most importantly, the foremost, etc.)
        - problem to solution (but, however, nevertheless, instead, still, yet, etc.)

References

1. Greene, Anne E. 2013. Writing Science in Plain English. 124 pages. The University of Chicago Press. Chicago, IL. ISBN: 978-0-226-02637-4
2. Elliot, Leslie Atkins, Kim Jaxon and Irene Salter. 2017. Composing Science: A facilitator's guide to writing in the science classroom. 163 pages. Teacher's College Press. NY, NY. ISBN: 978-0-8077-5806-9.