

## 1.7 Jargon and Inappropriate Language

Words or phrases that may be easily understood in the course of everyday conversation are often inappropriate and unsuited for scientific writing. Scientific writing has its own preferred set of common scientific words and concise general phrases that take the place of jargon that may otherwise be confusing and unspecific.

The use of jargon in scientific writing depends on the author's readership. If the author is addressing people in his or her own field, it is best to exclude jargon. The primary objective is to be as clear as possible in order to insure that readers understand the language and phrasing of a text.

A scientific text should not be filled with unneeded phrases. They do not add information and they make a sentence harder to understand. For example, "despite the fact that" should be omitted from a sentence and replaced with "although."

The following chart lists the preferred forms of scientific jargon as well as the more concise form of commonly used phrases that are unnecessarily long and wordy.

Jargon/Circumlocution	Preferred Form
A majority of	most
A number of	few, many, several, some
Accounted for the fact that	because
Along the lines of	like
An increased number of	more
An order of magnitude	ten times
Are in agreement with	agree
Are of the same opinion	agree
As a consequence of	because
Ascertain the location of	find
At the present moment	now
Blood sugar	blood glucose
By means of	by, with
Cardiac diet	diet for a patient with cardiac disease
Carry out	perform, conduct
Caused injuries to	injured
Completely filled	filled

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<b>Jargon/Circumlocution</b>	<b>Preferred Form</b>
Conducted inoculation	inoculated experiments on
Chart	medical record
Chief complaint	chief concern
Circular in shape	circular
Commented to the effect that	said, stated
Conduct an investigation into	investigate
Congenital heart disease	congenital cardiac anomaly
Definitely proved	proved
Despite the fact that	although
Draws to a close	ends
Due to the fact that	because
During the course of	during
During the time that	while, when
Emergency room	emergency department
Exam	examination
Expired	died
Fall off	decline, decrease
Fewer in number	fewer
File a lawsuit against	sue
For the purpose of examining	to examine
For the reason that	because
Future plans	plans
Gastrointestinal infection	gastrointestinal tract infection
Genitourinary infection	genitourinary tract infection
Give rise to	cause
Goes under the name of	is called
Has the capability of	can, is able
Has the potential to	can
Have an effect on	affect
Heart attack	myocardial infarction
Hyperglycemia of 250 mg/dL	hyperglycemia (blood glucose level of 250 mg/dL)
If conditions are such that	if, when
In a satisfactory manner	satisfactorily, adequately
In all cases	always, invariably
In case	if
In close proximity to	near
In connection with	about, concerning
In my/our opinion	I/we think

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<b>Jargon/Circumlocution</b>	<b>Preferred Form</b>
In order to	to
In regard to	about, regarding
In terms of	in, of, for
In the course of	during, while
In the event that	if
In the near future	soon
In the vicinity of	near
In those areas where	where
In view of the fact that	because
Is in a position to	can, may
It has been reported by Smith	Smith reported
It is apparent, therefore that	apparently
It is believed that	[OMIT]
It is often the case that	often
It is possible that the cause is	the cause may be
It is this that	this
It is worth pointing out that	note that
It would thus appear that	apparently
Jugular ligation	jugular vein ligation
Lab	laboratory
Labs	laboratory test results
The labs have not	the laboratories have not
Lacked the ability to	could not
Large amounts of	much
Large in size	large
Large numbers of	many
Left heart failure	left ventricular failure
Lenticular in character	lenticular
Located in, located near	in, near
Look after, take care of	watch, care for
The majority of	most
Make an adjustment to	adjust
Masses are of large size	Masses are large
Necessitates the inclusion of	needs, requires
Normal range	reference range
Of a reversible nature	reversible
On account of	because
On behalf of	for
On the basis of	from, by, because
On the grounds that	because

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<b>Jargon/Circumlocution</b>	<b>Preferred Form</b>
On two separate occasions	twice
Original source	source
Orthopod	Orthopedic surgeon
Owing to the fact that	because, due to
Pap smear	Papanicolaou test (or Pap test)
Passed away	died
Past history	history
The patient failed treatment	treatment failed
The patient was diagnosed	the patient's illness was diagnosed
The person in question	this person
Plants exhibited good growth	plants grew well
Preemie	premature infant
Prepped	prepared
Prior to	before
Produce an inhibitory effect on	inhibit
Psychiatric floor	psychiatric department, service, unit, ward
The question as to whether	whether
Referred to as	called
Respiratory infection	respiratory tract infection
Results so far achieved	results so far, results to date
Right brain	right side of the brain
Serves the function of being	is
Smaller in size	smaller
Status post	after, following
Subsequent to	after
Surgeries	operations, surgical procedures
Symptomatology	symptoms
Take into consideration	consider
The fish in question	the fish/these fish
The question as to whether	whether
The tests have not as yet	The tests have not
Therapy of [a condition]	therapy for
Through the use of	by, with
Throughout the entire area	throughout the area
The treatment having been performed	after treatment
Two equal halves	two halves

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Jargon/Circumlocution	Preferred Form
Urinary infection	urinary tract infection
Was of the opinion that	believed
With a view to getting	to get
With reference to	was
With regard to	about, concerning
With the result that	so that

### 1.8 Bias-Free Language and Descriptions

Terminology and phrasing for issues regarding gender, sex, disabilities, race, and ethnicity develop constantly in response to changing attitudes about what is considered appropriate and acceptable. It is important to keep up-to-date on opinions regarding these issues and to realize that even relatively recent style manuals may be inconsistent in this area. For example, a manual from the late 1980s uses the term “mentally retarded” in its section on how one should avoid bias against individuals with disabilities. This term is now out-of-date and is considered inappropriate and offensive in both everyday use and in scientific writing. Using socially acceptable bias-free words and phrasing is vital to any scientific writing, and because it is such a delicate area, it is necessary to be as knowledgeable as possible about changes in appropriate terminology.

**i. Gender and sex.** Avoid using pronouns that are social stereotypes or habitually biased. Some sentences are clearly gender biased and should be avoided. The sentence, “We will have a new president in eight years and he will change the country,” is biased because of the assumption that the new president will be male. Instead, write, “We will have a new president in eight years and he or she will change the country.” To avoid the pronoun altogether write, “In eight years, our new president will change the country.”

Some terms with gender reference are considered widely acceptable because of their non-gender specific definition. For example, “This research provides new information on the development of humankind” may be regarded as being habitually gender-biased because of the inclusion of “man” in “humankind.” If this term is unacceptable to an author