

# THE INTRODUCTION

*Colleen Aldous*

## **Writing process**

1. Are you concentrating on getting the words for a first draft down in their entirety, ignoring the temptation to correct spelling, format prettily etc as you go?

## **Structure**

1. Is there anything in the Introduction which is more appropriately placed in Methods, Results or Discussion? Check sentence by sentence.
2. Do the concepts or topics you introduce play out in a logical order?
3. In terms of topics or concepts, have you followed an A...B...C structure, and not an A...B...A...C...B...A...C...structure?
4. Is your Introduction relatively short in comparison to how you imagine the Discussion will turn out?

## **Argument and logic**

1. Do you have a very clear concept of the message you wish to put across to the reader? Do you know what you want to say?
2. Can you truthfully say that there is no woolliness or fudging in your thinking?
3. Do you know what you set out to show, and what you have actually shown?
4. Can you identify the arguments in your text, and are they clearly defined and delineated?

## ***Keeping it brief and succinct***

1. Are there any words, sentences and paragraphs that really don't need to be there in order for the argument to come through clearly?

## **Style and choice of words**

Once you have that first draft down:

## ***Meaning and ambiguity***

1. Is the meaning of every single word, sentence and paragraph crystal clear?
2. Is your writing entirely free of ambiguity, i.e. the possibility of being interpreted in some way other than what you intend?

## ***Style***

1. Is the English acceptable?
2. Have you avoided flowery phrases such as “Much to our surprise” and “It is amazing that”
3. Have you stuck to a standard set of words and terms and avoided multiple ways of saying the same thing for supposed stylistic purposes?

## **Appropriate synthesis of the literature**

Have you *used* the literature in your Introduction, not just *reviewed* it or *parroted* it?

## **Referencing**

1. Are your references all immediately available to you in a software reference manager?
2. Are you referencing properly as you go? Not delaying references till later?
3. Are you using some form of author-date referencing?
4. Can you explain the reason for every reference you have included, in terms of:
  - Ascribing credit, acknowledging other people’s work
  - Providing evidence and support for a statement you make
  - Providing a link to a source of further information
  - Bypassing the need for you to explain or describe something yourself, by referring readers elsewhere
5. Check every statement you have made. Are there any that aren’t referenced but should be, in terms of the above four categories?
6. Is your search for references up to date?
7. Are you confident you have not missed important references?
8. Are you sure that you have conveyed the meaning of every reference exactly as the authors of that paper intended?