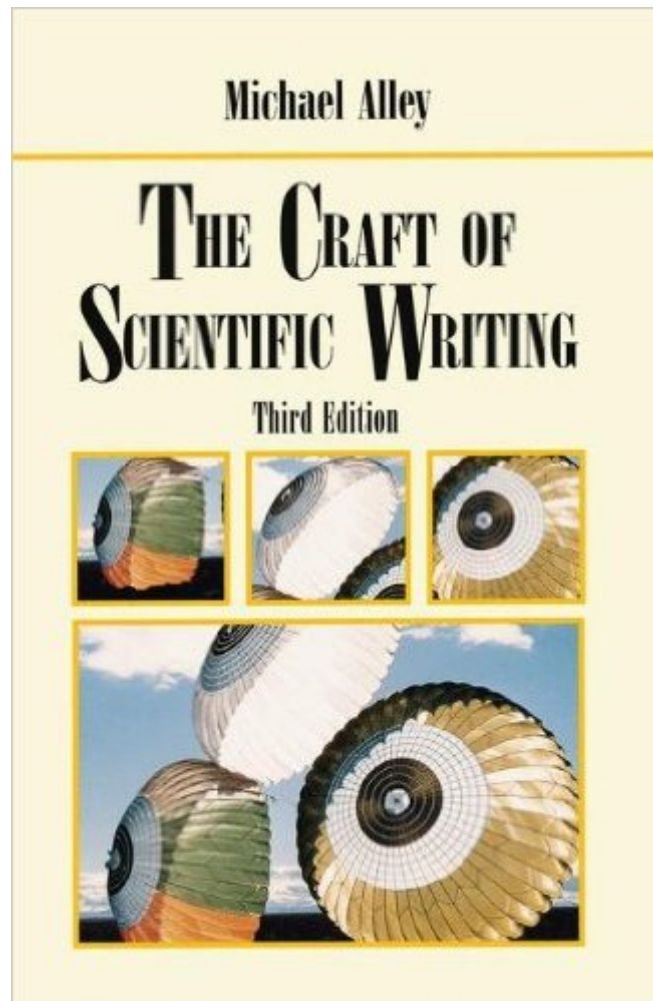


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The Craft Of Scientific Writing, 3rd Edition



Synopsis

Designed to help both professional and student scientists and engineers write clearly and effectively, this text approaches the subject in a fresh way. Using scores of examples from a wide variety of authors and disciplines, the author - himself a writer and physicist -- demonstrates the difference between strong and weak scientific writing, and how to convey ideas to the intended audience. In addition, he gives advice on how to start writing, and how to revise drafts, including many suggestions about approaching a wide variety of tasks - from laboratory reports to grant proposals, from internal communications to press releases - as well as a concise guide to appropriate style and usage.

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Customer Reviews

I've had this book for many years, and I still pull it out to use it. It is a light read, and not the style guide of other technical writing manuals. What is unique is that it points out the usual ruts we all get into, like redundant or overly complicated sentence construction. By giving 'before' and 'after' writing samples, it is easy to see how much better a few changes make. I have gotten more out of this book, in terms of being a better technical writer (I'm a systems engineer), than I have out of any other book. I also like the reference section in the back about proper word usage (ex: affect vs effect). The book also covers illustration do's and don'ts. If you want style guide info, you will have to look elsewhere. But to improve the clarity of your writing, this is the book to get.

The goal of writing in science is to communicate information. Unfortunately too many people in science, including myself, write in a manner that is little more than unintelligible. Having read this book, I now feel sorry for the people who had to read my work. Too much scientific literature is poorly crafted and it is only natural that newcomers try to science emulate this poor style. As a reader of scientific literature, I always thought there was something wrong with me because I could not read the articles. I would get stuck on a passage and, no matter how hard I tried, I would not be able to get past it. Now I know that this is because the writing is poorly crafted. The Craft of Scientific Writing gives an appreciation of the flaws that we all make in our writing. There are plentiful examples of poor writing, which are contrasted with good writing styles. Also, the explanations are clear and easy to understand. Despite appearances, there is no rule, man-made or natural, that says that scientific writing cannot be clear, crisp and fluid. If you write any kind of scientific literature do yourself a favour and read this book. It will help you to become a better writer.

This is a good book to start with. The book gives an outline of the structure and rules of scientific writing. The tone is always funny yet always complete and usefull. It is full with practical examples that complement the text. The only drawback is that most examples -not all- are taken from engeneering and similar sciences and thay may sound extrange to biologist or scientists from other areas. I would recomend this books to young scientists and students that are looking to improve their writing skills.

We (the GeoWriting class at OU) recommend this book to beginning scientific writers. Alley's writing style is straightforward, making the book easy to understand. The chapter titles are precisely labeled, allowing one to quickly locate information on specific stylistic problems. Furthermore, Alley writes the way he tells us to write; far from being hypocritical, he practices what he preaches. Specifically, Alley makes it clear to younger scientists that it is okay to write short sentences. His use of specific examples helped us be more fluid and concise in our writing. He also gave specific advice on how and when to include details, which was an area we had trouble with. Aside from improving our writing, this book was also useful in understanding how read and critique other papers by providing examples of common mistakes. Naturally, for our own writing, Alley also gives ideas on how to fix those mistakes. Compared to textbooks from other writing courses we've taken, this book includes useful information, rather than merely giving writing examples (e.g., short stories). On the downside, Alley's examples often focused too much on engineering applications; he should have included more examples from other sciences. At times the

examples are also too long and it seems like Alley goes off on a tangent. Finally, while figures used are relevant to what is discussed, the lack of color makes them boring. Overall, this book is more readable, but less dense than the average textbook. It is worth the money for a course text. We certainly got \$12 worth of information out of it.

This is a really great book. It's very useful for preparing to write. It doesn't so much tell you what you need to include, so it's not a manual on what to write, but does a great job explaining how to get your message across in an effective way (major pitfalls to avoid, examples on how bad writing can be improved, etc). I definitely held on to this after the class was finished and I've gone back to it while working on my thesis.

I highly recommend this book for those of you who are inexperienced scientific writers. I am really struggling with scientific writing right now. Finding this book has been a blessing. It is very well written in that the language is simple and straightforward. Excellent examples are provided that have been very helpful for me such as: how to write using the active voice and first person (often frowned upon in scientific writing) effectively. I have had this book for about three months and it is already dog eared and filled with sticky notes. I am planning on ordering the e version as soon as I get my new kindle. This will decrease the weight of my bag since I carry it with me just about everywhere I go. I also think more experienced writers will benefit from this book. I have read many scientific articles by experts and some of them are very difficult to read due to unnecessarily long and complex sentences. This book gives some very good tips on how to keep sentences concise so that the complexity of the science can be better appreciated.

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