

Science Writing Support

STEM writing tip sheet with links / Mount Writing Centre



writing style • lab reports • research writing • research guides
for your science discipline • critical appraisal • literature reviews
• source citation • Library research help • Writing Centre tutors

Mount Writing Centre

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Science Writing Support

MOUNT WRITING CENTRE

WRITING STYLE • LAB REPORTS • RESEARCH WRITING • RESEARCH GUIDES FOR YOUR SCIENCE DISCIPLINE • CRITICAL APPRAISAL • LITERATURE REVIEWS • SOURCE CITATION • LIBRARY RESEARCH HELP

Writing Style

- In science writing and reporting, be specific and accurate. Science writing aims to be direct and clear.
- Avoid personification and personalization in your science writing.
 - Generally, use third person: “they,” “it,” and avoid first or second person: “I,” “we,” “our,” “you.”
 - Do not include your opinion, unless requested by your instructor.
 - Avoid or (if directed) clarify personal bias—state the facts as best as you can.
- **Review basic guidelines, see samples, and use inclusive language:**
 - [Scientific Writing Made Easy: A Step-by-Step Guide to Undergraduate Writing in the Biological Sciences \(msvu.ca\)](#)
 - [Academic Writing - Applied Human Nutrition - Guides at Mount Saint Vincent University \(msvu.ca\)](#)
 - [Elements of Indigenous Style: A Guide for Writing By and About Indigenous Peoples](#)
 - [APA Inclusive Language Guide](#)

Lab Reports

Generally, between departments, lab reports follow a similar structure for basic sections: Introduction, Methods, Results, Discussion, Conclusion, Citations, and Appendices.

- [Lab Reports and Writing - Biology - Guides at Mount Saint Vincent University \(msvu.ca\)](#)

- [Lab Reports and Writing - Chemistry and Physics - Guides at Mount Saint Vincent University \(msvu.ca\)](#)
- <https://advice.writing.utoronto.ca/types-of-writing/lab-report/>

Research Writing

- Planning your research paper:
<https://writing.wisc.edu/handbook/assignments/planresearchpaper/>
- More on abstract writing: <https://advice.writing.utoronto.ca/types-of-writing/abstract/>

When reporting statistics or study data, include relevant information:

- Year the study was conducted (For example, is it recent research?)
- Sample size
- Sample info, such as inclusion criteria (For example, was the study done on humans?)
- Direct statistics such as percentages, odds ratio, p-value, effect of intervention on primary outcomes, etc.

Provide enough information so the reader does not have to go to the article themselves!

Research Guides (The Mount Library)

- [Articles & Journals - Applied Human Nutrition - Guides at Mount Saint Vincent University \(msvu.ca\)](#)
- [Articles & Journals - Biology - Guides at Mount Saint Vincent University \(msvu.ca\)](#)
- [Articles & Journals - Chemistry and Physics - Guides at Mount Saint Vincent University \(msvu.ca\)](#)
- [Articles & Journals - Mathematics - Guides at Mount Saint Vincent University \(msvu.ca\)](#)
- [Articles & Journals - Psychology - Guides at Mount Saint Vincent University \(msvu.ca\)](#)

Critical Appraisal

- [Critical Evaluation of Sources - Applied Human Nutrition - Guides at Mount Saint Vincent University \(msvu.ca\)](#)
- <https://advice.writing.utoronto.ca/researching/critical-reading/>
- <https://advice.writing.utoronto.ca/types-of-writing/book-review/>

Literature Reviews

- <https://advice.writing.utoronto.ca/types-of-writing/literature-review/>

Source Citation

Follow your faculty or instructor's preferred citation style. Expect to learn different styles. Here is guidance for some citation styles used in each department:

Applied Human Nutrition

- International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE; Formerly Vancouver): https://www.nlm.nih.gov/bsd/uniform_requirements.html
- [About - Nutrition Citation Style - Guides at Mount Saint Vincent University \(msvu.ca\)](#)

Biology

- Council of Science Editors (CSE): https://cdn.dal.ca/content/dam/dalhousie/pdf/library/Style_Guides/cse_style8.pdf

Chemistry and Physics

- American Chemical Society (ACS): <https://pubs.acs.org/doi/full/10.1021/acsguide.40303>

Psychology

- American Psychological Association (APA): <https://apastyle.apa.org/instructional-aids/reference-examples.pdf>; and <https://apastyle.apa.org/instructional-aids/reference-guide.pdf>
- APA 7th edition: [“Citing Traditional Knowledge or Oral Traditions of Indigenous Peoples” \(section 8.9\)](#)

Science Research Help

The Mount has a science-specific Research Librarian, Sandra Sawchuk (sandra.sawchuk@msvu.ca) if you are looking for help finding or citing articles. The Mount Library also offers in-person or online Research Help appointments. You can book an appointment here:

- *Online* appointment link: <https://msvu.libcal.com/appointments/online>
- *In-person* appointment link: <https://msvu.libcal.com/appointments/on-campus>

Science Writing support at the Mount Writing Centre

Grad science tutors at the [Mount Writing Centre](#) offer science-specific writing support: Whether it's a lab report, research paper, critical appraisal, or literature review, they'll help with any stage of the writing process. Appointments are available morning, afternoon, evening, or weekends, on campus or online.

STEM tutor booking hours vary by semester: these are advertised each term—you can reach out to writing@msvu.ca if you would like to book specifically with a science tutor.

Keep in mind that, even if a STEM tutor is unavailable, *all* tutors are trained to help you improve a piece of writing.

- WHAT CAN YOU GET HELP WITH:

Writing Centre tutors help students with academic, professional, or creative written work for undergraduate and graduate programs. This includes all stages of essay and research papers as well as slides, interview questions, creative projects, and grant or program applications.

- WHAT HAPPENS IN A SESSION: [2-minute video intro to Writing Centre help](#)

- HOW TO BOOK:

Self-Booking appointment link (online or on campus):

<https://outlook.office365.com/owa/calendar/MountWritingCentre@msvuhfx.onmicrosoft.com/bookings/>

- WHERE WE ARE: Campus appointments and weekly drop-ins take place in a private, sunny, quiet space in EMF 203 near the McCain link: [see the Centre here](#)

