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HOW TO WRITE A GOOD SCHOLARLY ARTICLE LIKE A PRO?

Most people have some bad memories about writing articles. Maybe it was in school, in university or maybe you have decided to become a writer but still lack some skills. Due to this reason we have decided to do a research on existing literature about writing scholarly articles and present the best tips that will help you to succeed. If this is no help than you have to rely on the saying that “practice is the best teacher”, at least in this case you will have theoretical background to start.

Think before you start

One piece of advice everyone will give you is to choose a topic that you **LIKE**. If this is not the case and you do not have any other options, then you have to do a good **RESEARCH** as Craig Lock (n.d) advised in “*How to write a good article*”. Read as much as you can, this will ease the process of generating ideas and the article will be more interesting for the audience. Supporting this idea Ben Yagoda (2013) in his book “*How to Not Write Bad*” has written that “reading is the best and the most painless way to absorb the rules of the language.” So the more you know about the subject the easier and less time consuming it will be for you.

As well as knowledge, knowing **WHO** will read your article is of key importance. Clearly defined audience will help you choose the appropriate language, style and structure of the article.

Do not forget that each assignment has specific **REQUIREMENTS**. Since you do not want to make mistakes and time is important, make sure you know those requirements well. The process of writing will become more pleasant and easier.

And the show begins

Let’s think a little of how people choose what to read. The first thing readers notice is the title, which should be **CATCHY** and clear enough to present the topic. The next step is to make a good introduction. A *Writing Center at The University of North Carolina* at Chapel Hill convinces

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us that while introducing the topic you do not get second chances. At this point you have to convince the reader to continue reading or otherwise they will skip your article without a doubt. So make sure that you:

- Explain the topic in a precise way;
- Show your knowledge and ability to involve the reader;
- Ensure the reader that it is beneficial to continue reading the material;
- Create curiosity and interest into the topic.

After you have mastered your introduction it is time to write the main body. **BRAINSTORM** the ideas which you want to present and line them up in a logical manner. These ideas should come while you are researching the topic and be interesting for you as well as the reader. Even if you can not think now of the appropriate titles for your sections, **DON'T WAIT!** Start from a scratch and the inspiration for the right title will come as you write.

Lets' hope that you all have already got some **INSPIRATION** and are not afraid to start writing your papers. While writing you have to remember several things:

- If you need to **CITE** or make a reference to some other document, make sure you are doing it right. You can easily make a search in the Internet and find citation style that is suitable for you. For example, *Princeton University* (2011) has made a good article about three styles: MLA – Literary studies, APA – Psychology, CMS – Chicago. Also there you can find information on how to cite electronic sources or make a reference page. Quoting different sources will definitely show your knowledge and literacy, but be careful because too many citations will leave too little space for your own ideas. Don't make it a summary of other writers' thoughts. After citing someone or making reference to others ideas make your own conclusions, connections or observations;
- Base information on **FACTS** not beliefs or thoughts. You should not present any misleading information, be precise and double check the source of information. Nowadays it has become very popular to use Wikipedia to gather information. This source of information can be used just to get basic understanding about the topic as the information in this site can be edited by anyone and might have weak points. So if you find information that you want to use in your paper, check the primary source and then double check it while comparing with other sources. Precaution is always useful;

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- Watch your **LANGUAGE!** Grammar mistakes in articles, publications or posters make people doubt about the skills and qualifications of the author. Young writers should be careful not to use slang, as they are used to this in their daily activities. If you are not sure about some terminology check it in the dictionary or ask some experts for help. *Publishing Connect* (2013) in “*Elements of Style for Writing a Scientific Journal Articles*” suggests avoiding abbreviations as they are often not used in a professional writing. Also it is suggested not to write long sentences as well as avoiding making few statements in one sentence. It is essential to find a way how to express yourself in a direct way and make yourself as clear as possible. Long sentences make it hard to follow the main idea and readers get confused. Speaking about statements you should know that each statement should be supported by some **ARGUMENTS** to make it more convincing. Also your language depends on the audience you are targeting. For example, if you are writing for a teens’ newspaper you can use informal language, insert some jokes. While scientific articles require formal language and precise terminology;
- Once in a while you might need to present statistics or other data. Here you might use graphs, tables or pictures. **LABEL** each graph, table or picture you present and include legend when necessary. This will make easier for the reader to understand given information and not to get lost among data. What is more, do not use any of these if you just want to look intelligent and show that you know how to make it. All data you are presenting have to be described and included information has to be necessary and proving something;
- **BULLET POINTS** are great to emphasize some information. However, it is not advised to end chapter with bullet points, some conclusions or comments should be made. Also if your chapter consists only of bullet points it will not look professional and will not be informative if given without a description. Summarizing main points will make them more important and easy to remember for the reader;
- Make sure that you are using **NEW DATA**. People are interested only in new information and it is advised to use data from a range of 10 years, as information is being constantly updated and new researches are made. Of course, in some cases you have to use some theories that have been written earlier and are known as critical.
- The final part of an article and each chapter is a **CONCLUSION**. It is said that this part readers remember the best. *Literacy Education Online* suggests stressing here the main aspect of what you have said in the article, giving your final remarks and covering

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everything with a feeling of a completion. However, you should not repeat what already has been said, present main information in a new way and make some connections. You have to make the reader eager to find more about your works. In case of a scientific article you should present your results and make recommendations based on your findings, make some paths for future researches.

Every professional article should have a **SUMMARY (ABSTRACT)** and this part is important as introduction. Here you have to present the reader with the main information given in the article, show some problem questions that your article is dealing with and you can also briefly describe the methods used in your study. The trick here is to present everything in a brief but informative way. In addition, it is advised to add **KEY WORDS** to your article. They help readers to find your article and distinguish among others. However, do not include too much as it will not look professional, will be confusing and simply be specific.

If you think that after writing conclusions your work is done, you have to think again. It is advised to relax and not to think about the article for a couple of days (if you are doing this not the night before the submission) and then read again with a **FRESH MIND**. This will help you see all mistakes, make better reasoning or construct better sentences. You can also ask for some help from your **FRIENDS**. A constructive critical opinion from outside is very healthy, it will allow you to reach better result, improve your writing skills and see yourself from a readers perspective.

GOOD LUCK!

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