

Guideline for critiquing papers

Adapted by Hala Chaoui, from:

1. Guidelines on writing a good paper from the proceedings of the winter simulation conference by James R. Wilson, Jan 2007.
2. Guidelines posted online at <http://stars.troy.edu/stars/CRSLISTS/UAB/THR-100.pdf>, by the Alabama Articulation and General Studies Committee (AGSC), 1st accessed on July 31, 2007.

Thought flow: presenting the problem, the solution, and the target audience.

Formulated the objectives of the paper?

Specified the scope of the paper's coverage of the subject and the results to be discussed? Gave background?

Organizing of the paper

In the introduction, did you state the precise subject of the paper immediately? state the problem to be solved? Summarized briefly the main results and conclusions? told the reader how the paper is organized?

In the main body of the paper, included enough detail in the main body of the paper so that the reader can understand what was done and how?

In the conclusion, explained how the theoretical and experimental results relate to the original problem, and the importance of the results? Stated the final conclusions explicitly in plain language?

Writing the paper

Was the abstract concise, complete in itself, and intelligible to a general reader in the field?

Did the abstract summarize the objectives of the paper, and the results and conclusions?

Does the paper state the basic principles underlying any new theoretical or experimental methods that are developed in the study?

Is the paper written as though you were talking to a group of interested colleagues about your work?

Is the paper accurate and clear?

Was the introduction accessible to general readers in your field?

In constructing each sentence, was old and new information placed in the

respective positions where readers generally expect to find it?

Did you place in the topic position (that is, at the beginning of the sentence) the old information linking backward to the previous discussion?

Did you place in the stress position (that is, at the end of the sentence) the new information you want to emphasize?

Did you place the subject of the sentence in the topic position, and follow the subject with the verb as soon as possible.

Did you express the action of each sentence in its verb.

Did you make the paragraph the unit of composition;
Did you begin each paragraph with a sentence that summarizes the topic to be discussed or with a sentence that helps the transition from the previous paragraph?

Did you provide a context for the discussion before asking the reader to consider new information?

Did you avoid paragraphs of extreme length—that is, one-sentence paragraphs and those exceeding 200 words.

Did you place the important conclusions in the stress position at the end of the paragraph.

Tables

For each table, did you compose a caption that briefly summarizes the content of the table. Did you comment explicitly in the text on the significance of the numbers in the table; and not force the reader to guess at your conclusions?

Figures

For each figure, did you compose a caption (or legend) that explains every detail in the figure—every curve, point, and symbol.

Suggestion on content

Typos and calculation errors

Syntax and word choice

Avoided doubles; saying the same word or idea twice?

Used vague sentence openings, such as: “there is, there are, it was, etc.”?

Avoided comma splices and run-ons?

Comma splice example: "Neil Simon writes comedies, Christopher Durang writes satires."

Run-on example: "Arthur Miller studied playwrighting and he later wrote Death of a Salesman."

other errors