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15 HOURS AGO EDIT

Writing Resources—An Annotated List of Helpful Books

Writing Resources—An Annotated List of Helpful Books

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Most expert authors feel they can never have or read too many books about writing. With that perspective in mind, here are a list of books that you might find helpful in your writing journey. These books were suggested by members of the International Academy of Nursing Editors (INANE) and the authors of this article. We have added annotations to provide context on why the book might be useful and for whom it might be best suited. We appreciate all those who contributed book suggestions and comments. Note: All prices are from Amazon in US dollars and are approximate; readers might find lower prices at different retailers and used booksellers.

COMPREHENSIVE BOOKS ON WRITING FOR HEALTHCARE PUBLICATIONS BY NURSES

If you're serious about writing, you need to have at least one of these books on your shelf. (And we're not just saying that because two of us are authors or coauthors!)

Anatomy of Writing for Publication for Nurses (3rd ed.), Cynthia Saver, 2017, Sigma Theta Tau International. Paperback: \$47.20, Ebook: \$49.45

Looking for a one-stop book on writing for publication? This might be your stop. Saver collaborated with 25 top writing and editorial experts to create a book that walks nurses through all facets of the publication process, from refining an idea and selecting a journal to writing and revising a manuscript. Readers learn how to craft an effective query letter, how editors choose manuscripts, and how to keep a writing schedule. The first part of the book focuses on the publication process, and the second part focuses on how to write specific types of articles, such as clinical, scholarly, and personal narratives. Many checklists and writing exercises are included, along with how to review an article. Nurses will find this book valuable whether they're writing their first or one hundred and first article, thanks to its non-stuffy writing style. (Robert Hess)

Manuscript Success: A Guide to Publishing in the Scholarly Literature, Leslie H. Nicoll, 2012, Bristlecone Pine Press. Ebook, PDF: \$8.99

I developed the *Manuscript Success* process over several years, while leading writing retreat workshops for various colleges, universities, and the National League for Nursing. I realized that many novice authors just sit down and start writing, without having a plan for what their article will look like or what journal they plan to submit it to for publication. *Manuscript Success* is a five-step process

(topic, due diligence, manuscript math outline, template article analysis, draft) that helps authors strategically plan the writing process. The book includes detailed explanations of each step, along with exercises and worksheets. From the Amazon review, “Short, practical, and informative.” (Leslie H. Nicoll)

Writing for Publication in Nursing (4th ed.), Marilyn H. Oermann and Judith C. Hays, 2018, Springer. Paperback: \$58.91, Ebook: \$55.96

This perennial favorite is a great resource for nurses looking for guidance on publishing research and journal articles. It takes readers through how to write systematic, integrative, and literature reviews; quality improvement studies; case studies; and research results. Many examples supplement the text, and electronic versions of useful forms supplement the text. Learner exercises help in developing competencies. (Cynthia Saver)

Writing in Nursing: A Brief Guide, Thomas Lawrence Long and Cheryl Tatano Beck, 2016, Oxford. Paperback: \$19.95

Writing in Nursing: A Brief Guide applies the key concepts of rhetoric and composition-audience, purpose, genre, and credibility-to examples based in nursing. It is part of a series of brief, discipline-specific writing guides from Oxford University Press designed for today’s writing-intensive college courses. Short and to-the-point, with lots of useful examples and explanations. Note: Cheryl Beck is a nurse; Tom Long is an associate professor in residence in the School of Nursing at the University of Connecticut. (LHN)

COMPREHENSIVE BOOKS ON WRITING FOR HEALTHCARE PUBLICATIONS BY NON-NURSES

Good books about writing aren't limited to nurse authors. Here are some books you might want to consider exploring.

The Handbook of Scholarly Writing and Publishing, Tonette S. Rocco, Timothy Gary Hatcher, and John W. Creswell, 2011, Jossey-Bass. Paperback: \$40, Ebook: \$26.39

The authors provide an overview of writing and publishing, while tossing in advice on a variety of topics, such as working with editors, dealing with rejection, and rewriting and resubmitting. It also covers how to be a good reviewer. (CS)

Scientific Writing = Thinking in Words, David Lindsay, 2011, CSIRO Publishing. Paperback: \$24.96, Ebook: \$15.31.

The author of this book recognizes that it's not easy for researchers to write about what they do and provides strategies for writing more confidently. A section on editing yourself contains pithy advice such as how to eliminate "stumbling blocks". It also includes a section that goes "beyond the scientific article" so you can learn how to prepare for an oral presentation at a conference and how to write for those who aren't scientists. (CS)

Write It Up: Practical Strategies for Writing and Publishing Journal Articles, Paul J. Silvia, 2014, American Psychological Association. Paperback: \$14.98, Ebook: \$15.40

This short book (224 pages) covers how to write a research article, while dropping in publishing strategies. A good book for the academic who is inexperienced with publishing. (CS)

Writing for Publication in Nursing and Healthcare: Getting It Right, Karen Holland and Roger Watson, 2012, Wiley. Paperback: \$21.65, Ebook: \$20.21

Nurse authors can benefit from the wisdom of those outside the profession, as this book proves. It provides a nice overview of the writing and publishing process and includes writing different types of publications, along with examples. (CS)

Writing Science: How to Write Papers That Get Cited and Proposals That Get Funded, Joshua Schimel, 2011, Oxford University Press. Hardcover: \$113.03, Paperback: \$33.95, Ebook: \$21.05

The title says it all and the content backs it up. The author approaches science writing from the perspective of storytelling. Thinking in terms of storytelling will make it more likely readers will read what you write. It includes exercises so readers can practice skills. (CS)

SPECIALTY BOOKS TARGETING SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF HEALTHCARE PUBLICATION

These books focus on specific topics of interest.

A Nurse's Step-by-Step Guide to Writing a Dissertation or Scholarly Project (2nd ed.), Karen Roush, 2018, Sigma Theta Tau International. Paperback: \$32.42, Ebook: \$31.16

This how-to book is short on words but full of examples of how to approach writing scholarly papers. It offers clear directions in a step-by-step format that guide students through each part of a capstone manuscript or dissertation. (Shawn Kennedy)

Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches (5th ed.), John W. Creswell, 2018, Sage. Paperback: \$58, Ebook: \$47.39

Struggling to understand the best approach for your latest research project? Want to get better at evaluating research studies? Turn to this book for a comparison of research design types and explanations for key points such as how to design a study and how to write the discussion section based on the type of approach. (CS)

Writing in the Digital Age: Savvy Publishing for Healthcare Professionals, Leslie H. Nicoll and Peggy L. Chinn, 2015, Wolters Kluwer/Lippincott Williams & Wilkins. Kindle Ebook: \$24.99 (Amazon); also available as a PDF on nursingcenter.com

This is a thorough handbook for those with questions about preparing work for publishing in today's digital world. All writers will appreciate the thoughtful reminders about preparing and submitting written work for publication. The book has a scholarly yet easy to read writing style. throughout the book. It is full of links to credible and pertinent resources to assist writers at any level, plus it contains an abundance of practical information that writers in the nursing and health-related disciplines will find very helpful. (Heather Carter-Templeton)

BOOKS FOR HONING YOUR WRITING CRAFT

Becoming a good writer is an ongoing journey—a journey without a final destination but full of joy along the way. Consider choosing one or more of these books to join you on your journey.

Becoming an Academic Writer: 50 Exercises for Paced, Productive, and Powerful Writing (2nd ed.), Patricia Goodson, 2016, Sage. Paperback: \$36.90, Ebook: \$17.82

No matter what skill you're trying to improve, you need to practice. Use the many exercises in this book to boost your writing skills in a range of areas, including writing the discussion section and writing abstracts. The author also covers some key building blocks of good writing, such as grammar and editing. (CS)

Bird by Bird: Some Instructions on Writing and Life, Anne Lamott, 2007, Anchor. Paperback: \$11.98, Ebook: \$11.99

The subtitle of this book is what intrigued me after a well-established nursing author recommended it to me. The author's use of words in this nonfiction book provides a great example of delivering messages that are not based in research results. (Patricia S. Yoder-Wise)

On Writing: 10th Anniversary Edition: A Memoir of the Craft, Stephen King, 2010, Scribner. Paperback: \$15.30, Ebook: \$12.99.

If you only read one book on writing, I highly recommend it be this one—and I've never read a Stephen King book (too scary!) After all, good writing is good writing, whether it's fiction or nonfiction. King touches on all the key points, while sharing his own writing journey. (CS)

On Writing Well: The Classic Guide to Writing Nonfiction (30th Anniversary Edition), William Zinsser, 2012, Harper Perennial. Paperback: \$12.75, Ebook: \$14.99

The shortest way to explain this book is simply to say it is a writers' bible. Although the edition cited above is from 2012, the book has been around for decades and has shaped the writing style of many who write non-fiction. (PY-W)

Write Tight: Say Exactly What You Mean with Precision and Power, William Brohaugh, 2007, Sourcebooks. Paperback: \$16.99, Ebook: \$9.99

Today's readers are often on a schedule, so they want information presented succinctly. But writing concisely can be challenging. Brohaugh provides concrete advice on how to identify "flabby writing," exercises to help avoid wordiness, and tests to assess conciseness. (CS)

BOOKS ABOUT GRAMMAR AND STYLE

The best writers understand that the fundamentals of grammar and style support good writing in the same way a solid foundation supports a good house.

Eats, Shoots & Leaves: The Zero Tolerance Approach to Punctuation, Lynne Truss, 2006, Avery. Paperback: \$10.90, Ebook: \$12.99

In addition to laughing from time to time, I found this book quite useful in determining where to place a comma. I notice that many authors today either sprinkle their sentences with commas, forget to use them, or misplace them in a sentence. Thus, this book helps re-ground all who read it in where commas go. Other punctuation also is included. (PY-W)

The Elements of Style (4th ed.), William Strunk and E. B. White, 1999, Longman. Paperback: \$9, Ebook: \$1.69, Free at <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/37134>

This book, first published in 1920, would be the "other bible" (along with *On Writing Well: The Classic Guide to Writing Nonfiction*) for authors. The contents are divided into six parts, starting with elementary rules of usage and ending with a section on spelling. Some of the rules are so practical that we may forget that some authors don't write that way. For example, in the section on composition, he

suggests using the active voice, putting statements in positive forms and omitting needless words. (PY-W)

The Sense of Style: The Thinking Person's Guide to Writing in the 21st Century, Steven Pinker, 2015, Penguin Books. Paperback: \$11.55, Ebook: \$12.99

This book provides practical tips, many based on research, for strengthening your writing. The author's strong ego and viewpoints sometime get in the way of the text, but there are enough evidence-based recommendations to compensate. (CS)

BOOKS TO IMPROVE YOUR PRODUCTIVITY

"I don't have enough time to write," is a frequent lament, but these books show how, with a little discipline, you can become a more productive writer than you thought.

How to Write a Lot: A Practical Guide to Productive Academic Writing (2nd ed.), Paul J. Silvia, 2018, APA LifeTools. Paperback: \$15.32 Ebook: \$12.79

Caution: Once you have read this book, you'll never in good conscious be able offer the typical excuses for not writing. Silvia uses his background as a psychologist to dispel "specious" barriers such as lack of time and emphasizes that authors need to establish a writing schedule, rather than waiting for inspiration to hit. He also throws in plenty of tips such as prewriting and motivation tips. (CS)

Writing Your Journal Article in Twelve Weeks: A Guide to Academic Publishing Success, Wendy Laura Belcher, 2009, Sage. Paperback: \$16.75, Ebook: \$27.99

The title says it all. Mark start on your calendar and get ready to create a journal article. (CS)

OTHER BOOKS OF INTEREST

The Art of Thinking Clearly, Rolf Dobelli, 2014, Harper Paperback. Paperback: \$12.03, Ebook: \$14.99

You'll be more effective as a writer if you know how your readers think, and if you can avoid cognitive errors that can weaken your writing. This book isn't about writing, but being able to think clearly will help you be a better writer.

Evaluating Research Articles from Start to Finish (3rd ed.), Ellen R. Girden and Robert I. Kabacoff, 2010, Sage. Paperback: \$34.95, Ebook: \$35.15

Good writers know how to analyze others' writing. This book walks readers through how to critically evaluate research articles. The lessons you learn doing so will help you improve your own writing. (CS)

OUT OF PRINT

Although these books are out of print, used editions can often be found online. Many of these books still reside on our bookshelves and are definitely "oldies but goodies."

A Nurse's Guide to Presenting and Publishing: Dare to Share, Kathleen T. Heinrich, 2007, Jones & Bartlett Learning.

Line by Line: How to Edit Your Own Writing, Claire Kehrwald Cook, 1985, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

Publish and Flourish: Become a Prolific Scholar (3rd ed.), Tara Gray, 2005, Teaching Academy, NMSU.

Writing Literature Reviews: A Guide for Students of the Social and Behavioral Sciences (4th ed.), Jose L. Galvan and Melisa C. Galvan, 2006, Routledge.

JUST FOR FUN

Snoopy's Guide to the Writing Life, Barnaby Conrad, 2004, Writers Digest Books.
Paperback: \$14.99

When you're feeling discouraged about writing, pick up this fun book that consists of Snoopy comic strips related to writing and includes comments from well-known authors. I always come away with smiling. (CS)

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