

# Writing in English: Easy Guide

## Keep it Simple

You can keep your manuscript concise and precise by adhering to the following guidelines:

- Only **one idea** per sentence
- Use the **active voice**, not the passive voice, when possible
- Delete **unnecessary** or **vague words** and replace them with more specific words

### Example:

**BAD:** The company that economists considered to be a model of modern employee conditions was Shravers Publishing, which was established as a subsidiary of the Shravers Educational Group by Dr John Mitchems in 1923.

**GOOD:** Economists considered Shravers Publishing to be a model of modern employee conditions. Dr John Mitchems established this company as a subsidiary of the Shravers Education Group in 1923.

By presenting one idea per sentence, you can reduce the first long sentence (33 words) to two shorter and clearer sentences (12 and 16 words, respectively).

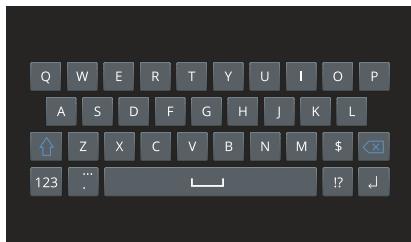
## Subject and Verb Placement

Readers expect the verb, a word that describes an action, in a sentence to be near the subject of that sentence.

### Example:

**BAD:** The patient's liver readings [s] at 48 hours after exposure to the virus **had increased** [v] by 50%.

**GOOD:** The patient's liver readings [s] **had increased** [v] by 50% at 48 hours after exposure to the virus.



For more information check out our tutorial on [Writing in English](#).

## Topic Position

The topic position refers to the information provided at the beginning of a sentence. This information serves two functions for a reader. First, it should introduce to the reader what information will be presented in the sentence.

**Example:**

**Avian influenza infection rates** have been increasing worldwide. **Transmission** has been rapid owing to high levels of international travel. **H5N1** is one type of avian influenza currently being studied. **Epidemiology** studies have shown this virus to be especially pathogenic.

## Stress Position

A reader will unconsciously focus at the end of the sentence to identify what is important. This information can be referred to as the stress position of a sentence.

**Example:**

1: Introduction of the new assembly line **increased manufacturing**.

2: Manufacturing increased after the **introduction of the new assembly line**.

## Comparisons

**Remember:**

1. Only compare similar things that can be compared fairly

**Example:**

**BAD:** The brain activity in Patient A was compared with Patient B.

**GOOD:** The brain activity in Patient A was compared with that of Patient B.

2. Avoid being vague – be as specific as possible

**Example:**

**BAD:** Reactions with the new machine were faster.

**GOOD:** Reactions with the new machine were faster than those with the old machine.  
The first sentence makes the reader wonder "Faster than what?"

3. Words such as "reduced," "increased," and "decreased" can only be used to compare something to the way it was before, not to compare two different things. To compare two different things (e.g., groups of patients), use words such as "higher," "shorter," or "more"

**Example:**

**BAD:** In our study, time until hibernation was reduced in the Experimental Group compared with the Control Group.

**GOOD:** In our study, time until hibernation was shorter in the Experimental Group than in the Control Group.