

## Writing well

Mark the boundaries of your own thoughts, ideas, and language, so that your reader knows where your ideas end and someone else's begins.

Use an active voice—avoid “to be” verbs and a passive tense.

Avoid quotations unless you absolutely cannot use your own words.

Make sure every paragraph has a clear focus—a clear introductory sentence and a clear summary / closing sentence.

Make the focus of your paper direct and clear at the very beginning.

Avoid dense sentences with too many statistics—refer to statistics and numbers parenthetically if possible.

Information included in figures and figure legends does not need to be repeated in the text of the results section.

Figure legends should explain any abbreviations or ambiguities in the figure itself. (Be sure to explain any error bars on your graph, indicating if they are standard errors or standard deviations).

When writing a research paper, use the hourglass approach. Start with a broad topic and theory, narrow it down to your specific research question, report your findings, and then discuss the implication of your findings in the broader context of the theory and topic with which you began your paper.

*Kendras checklist*  
*Mitchell, et al checklist*

## George Orwell's Rules (from Pyrczak & Bruce 2005)

1. Never use a metaphor, simile, or other figure of speech that you are used to seeing in print.
2. Never use a long word where a short one will do.
3. If it is possible to cut a word out, always cut it out.
4. Never use the passive voice when you can use the active voice.
5. Never use a foreign phrase, a scientific word, or a jargon word if you can think of an everyday English equivalent.
6. Break any of these rules sooner than say anything outright “barbarous” (P. 170).