

## Scientific English: Key points

### Be clear

- Put the subject/important information at the beginning of the sentence.  
~~Among the factors that influence the choice of parameters are time and cost.~~  
Time and cost are among the factors that influence the choice of parameters
- Keep word order S-V-O-IO with 4 elements close together.
- Avoid sentences starting with 'it is'.  
~~It is necessary to use X~~ X must be used.  
~~It is surprising that no method is currently available~~ Surprising, no method is currently available
- Avoid putting 'extra information' between the subject and verb: 'segmented sentences'.  
~~This feature, owing to its high cost, will only be of limited use~~  
This feature will only be of limited use, owing to its high cost
- Beware of ambiguous pronouns, uncountable nouns and false friends
- Use active verbs (avoid: *do, make*)
- Use precise vocab and be quantitative (avoid: *some, a few, many*)
- Avoid informal language (e.g., contractions, *like, little, big*)
- Only use synonyms for non-keywords, NOT keywords
- Avoid noun strings (~~art-state technology~~; state-of-the-art technology): 'of' is your friend!

### Be concise

- Avoid long sentences
- Use simple words and phrases (e.g. avoid long transitional words/phrases)
- Cut out redundant or repeated words  
We used ~~two~~ databases, X and Y, both of which...
- Use verbs! Replace a verb + noun construction with a single verb  
~~to reach a conclusion~~ to conclude  
~~X was used in the calculation of Y~~ X was used to calculate Y

## Do not use:

### Thanks to

*Incorrect when used to indicate the cause of something, or what method/equipment you used.*

*Use: by, because of, using*

The flaw was detected ~~thanks to~~ because of this variation.

DNA was replicated ~~thanks to~~ using PCR.

### Indeed

*It's an archaic academic phrase that most native English speakers never use!*

## Be careful with:

### Important

*Incorrect when used as an adjective to indicate a large quantity*

*Use: large, considerable, major, many lots*

~~An important amount of money~~ = A large amount of money

### Realize

*Incorrect when used as a verb meaning to make something a reality*

*Depending on what you want to say: accomplish, complete, use, utilise, finish, conduct*

The test was ~~realized~~ completed over a number of days.

### Control

*Incorrect when used as a verb meaning to check for faults*

*Use: to test, to check for, to inspect, to detect*

This method was used to ~~control~~ inspect the parts of the equipment.

## Use sparingly:

**However, moreover, furthermore:** transitional words do have their place, but not at the beginning of every single sentence. Use sparingly and appropriately to lead the reader from one idea to another or connecting sentences to maintain flow and clarity. Used too often, your writing can become confusing.

**In order to:** be concise, don't use more words than necessary. '*In order to*' can almost always be written simply as *to*. It is definitely not needed when the focus is the activity rather than the purpose.

**Allow/enable/permit:** often involve long constructions which can be removed.

The model ~~permits the analysis~~ of X

This model can analyze X.

The use of these substrates ~~enabled us to highlight~~ the presence of X

The use of these substrates highlighted the presence of X.