

Why write?

Bob Bender
Department of MCD Biology
University of Michigan

Why write?

The rewards of writing (honestly):
“The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly”

The Good?

Communication

The Bad?

Ego Boost

The Ugly?

Job, Grants, Tenure, Promotion

Communication: Science is a “Social Disease”

- Never alone
 - No ivory towers
- Communication vs. Archiving
 - Publication vs. Notebooks
- Propaganda (advertising)
 - Fish and hen
 - Bach and Mendelssohn
 - Your work is important only if others see it and build on it

Who writes? Everyone

- Academia
- Industry
- Government
- Foundations
- Media

Scientific writing is like poetry

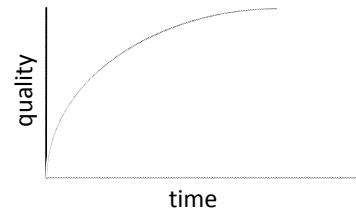
Rules and structures

Music Analogy

- Just push the right keys at the right time and the music makes itself.
(J.S.Bach)



Writing is a learned skill



The Rule of Thirds

- Get the answer
- Make the data “aesthetically pleasing”
- Write the paper

Quality?

How do you measure it?
Who measures it?

The Reader

- Another music analogy
 - Grand Opera vs. Grand Ole Opry
- Deconstructionism
 - It does not matter what you write (say), only what the reader sees (hears)

Two famous examples from Russia

pardon impossible send to siberia

Importance of white space

Corporal Kizhe

The Reader

- Deconstructionism
 - It does not matter what you write (say), only what the reader sees (hears)
- Shifting the focus from you to them
 - “KISS”
 - Know your reader
- What should your writing say to the reader?

What should a paper say?

Read me!
Believe me!
Care about me! (Remember me!)

How do you do that?

Bender's Four Questions

Bender's Four Questions:

- What's the question?
- What's the basic approach?
- What's the answer?
- So what?