

McMillan, V.E.: **Writing Papers in the Biological Sciences**. 2nd Ed. - Bedford Books, Boston 1997. ISBN 0-312-11504-0. 199 pp., GBP 11.50.

The updated second edition of this textbook is intended as a help to biology students in their first attempts to produce a scientific prose. Many bad and good examples (mostly printed in a Courier font) are taken from student texts, and it is shown how to eventually improve them. Very instructive are also faulty sentences and their revised versions. The book consists of ten chapters, lists of additional reading and cited references, and a comprehensive index.

The author starts her explanations with literature search, continues with getting and handling experimental results, preparing tables and figures, writing research and review papers (both with full text examples), confronting the results with literature knowledge, and drafting, revising, and finishing papers. Chapter 9 is on preparing for examination, a topic certainly useful for students, but hardly falling within the title of the book. Chapter 10 is on other forms of scientific communication, such as oral presentation (why to call it "other form of biological **writing**"?), poster preparation, writing grant proposals and letters of application with résumé.

The shortcomings of this textbook are only few. Some examples of proper writing could have been less talkative, *e.g.*, by omitting phrases such as "It is well known that...", "conditions of...". I wonder why the author does not prohibit the use of units other than those of the SI-system (Å, cal, °F, Kcal, *etc.*): they are included in the list of abbreviations on pp. 149-151 (that is unnecessarily repeated on pp. 198-199).

The book is not intended to be a decoration of a bookshelf, and this is why I appreciate the practical spire binding. It enables a comfortable reading in a bed (is there some connection with the Bedford Books?). I fully recommend all forms of its reading also to European students of biology.

Z. ŠESTÁK (*Praha*)