Davis, M.: **Scientific Papers and Presentations**. - Academic Press, San Diego - London - Boston - New York - Sydney - Tokyo - Toronto 1997. ISBN 0-12-206370-8. 296 pp., USD 19.95.

The book of an American author (from the Department of Agronomy at the University of Arkansas) deals with all fields of scientific communication (even if the design of book cover will be more appropriate for a book on how to master watercolour painting). In 19 chapters and 13 appendices that are in some places too talkative and some recommendations are repeated in more chapters, the author explains how to write a rough draft of a (multipurpose) text (chapter 3) based on literature search (chapter 4), how to prepare a research (grant) proposal (chapter 5) or a graduate thesis (chapter 6), and how to write a paper for scientific journal (chapter 7). Further on, she deals with style and accuracy of the final draft (chapter 8), with its reviewing and revising (chapter 9). Special chapters are dedicated to proper titles and abstracts (chapter 10) and to preparing tables and figures (chapter 11). Chapter 12 is on ethical and legal issues. Four chapters are on oral presentations, including general principles (chapter 13), use of various symbols, colours, body language, *etc.* (chapter 14), and slide preparation and presentation (chapters 15 and 16). Posters are the topic of chapter 17. Chapter 18 deals with group communications (various types of discussion forums), and chapter 19 with popularisation of scientific results. Martha Davis correctly underlines the importance of thinking and talking for preparation of a vivid and readable text. She gives several useful recommendations, *e.g.*, that one has to think before writing (p. 27), which letter sizes are proper for posters (p. 176), *etc.* Some examples apply only to the U.S. (*e.g.*, the proposal form to a federal agency on p. 47), some are not easily understandable (sample headings on p. 83). Several special cases are also presented, such as how to speak at the job interview. The question of sex in terms like chairman, chairwoman, or chairperson is solved by introducing the replacement term "moderator". The poster shown in Fig. 17-2 and in Appendix 13 is certainly not an optimum one: graphs and figures are put in the lower part of panel, the text is too long.

I think that the appendices vary in quality. Appendix 1 on weaknesses in writing brings clear examples of sentence construction, wordiness, and of misplaced elements in sentences. An experienced editor would probably improve both the sample literature review (app. 2) and sample proposal (app. 3) shown as recommended examples. App. 4 (Alternate roots to the thesis) is a fairly primitive complicated explanation. One has to praise the excellent comments to a manuscript given in app. 5: I never met a reviewer who gives such detailed comments written is such elegant long sentences. I like app. 6 (Evolution of a title), app. 7 (Evolution of an abstract), and app. 8 (Putting data into tables and figures). I wonder whether app. 9 (Requesting copyright permission) and app. 10 (Imhof's theory of colors) are necessary in textbook of this size. App. 11 is a useful pamphlet against boring speakers. In app. 12 a set of 24 slides is recommended as optimum for a 12- to 15-min talk. I would cut the amount of slides by half and put more text onto each one.

Each chapter contains a list of references; in addition, annotated bibliography of select books is on pp. 285-289. A good subject index is supplemented. Some misprints show how careful one has to be when using PC setting (*e.g.*, the same title *plus* two lines of text are on both pp. 34 and 35).

Even if I do not agree with some recommendations of the author (*e.g.*, that the reviewer should not rewrite the original text or edit—in small journals such help is welcome; use of the unit mL or writing HCL, *etc.*), I recommend this textbook to students in natural science.

Z. ŠESTÁK (*Praha*)