

Description

Authors are understandably excited about the results of their research and aren't always modest about trumpeting it. A finding is often described as novel, unique, the first such result ever published. Results may not be merely interesting, but remarkable, intriguing, and unprecedented. Words alone may fail to do justice to the occasion so extra emphasis is added by italics and exclamation marks: "*Our study is the first example of …!*" Although this tendency is understandable, it's not appropriate form. Whenever you find yourself writing purple prose, resist the urge and stick to black and white. Too much enthusiasm not only looks bad, it can prevent your paper from being published.

Most journals discourage the use of "subjective evaluation language" in manuscripts and sometimes forbid it. Here is what the *Journal of Organic Chemistry* has to say on the subject: "Manuscript titles should not make claims of priority, originality, convenience, effectiveness, or value. For example, the words "convenient," "efficient," "elegant," "expedient," "facile," "first," "new," "novel," "practical," "simple," "unique," "unprecedented," and "versatile" should not be used. In addition, editors may ask authors to moderate or remove what they judge to be excessive use of subjective evaluative language elsewhere in manuscripts."

Why do journals discourage this sort of enthusiasm? Partly because it is a waste of space. Journal articles are long enough already without the addition of what are essentially filler words. Most publications contain something that is new, so why state it in the title? This only serves to make the title "read long." The goal of scientific writing should be clarity and conciseness. If an aspect of the work is really novel it may be appropriate to state this in the text, but the bar should be high—not just run of the mill new, but startlingly unexpected.

I find it annoying to have an author tell me something is interesting or remarkable. Isn't that for me to determine? Writers should bear in mind that the readers are pretty smart. If your results are remarkable, the readers will know it without any coaching.

For *Journal of Organic Chemistry* author guidelines on subjective evaluative language see page 6 of the following link:
https://pubs.acs.org/paragonplus/submission/joceah/joceah_authguide.pdf

Category

1. Manuscripts & Grants

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2. Reporting Research

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