

Why Is It Important to Maintain Consistency in Academic Writing?

Author

Enago Academy

Post Url

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In written communication, consistency can be defined as the orderly presentation of a set of linked/associated elements in the text. These elements can be considered to be linked or associated when it is intended that they be perceived as a coherent group (for example, abbreviations, figure/table headings, etc.). Inconsistency is the most common error made by authors writing scholarly manuscripts. Some concepts of language and style are often open-ended (unless [journal guidelines specify a style](#)) and can be puzzling; however, this can be made simpler if we keep one thing in mind: in case of more than one acceptable convention, it is better to choose one and stick with it throughout the manuscript.

Here are some aspects to keep in mind when ensuring consistency.

Keep it simple, brief, and attractive: The primary function of a title is to provide a precise summary of the paper's content. So keep the title brief and clear. Use active verbs instead of noun-based phrases and avoid unnecessary details.

Avoid: *Drug XYZ has an effect of muscular contraction for an hour in snails of Achantina fulcia species.*

Better: *Drug XYZ induces muscular contraction in Achantina fulcia snails.*



Use appropriate descriptive words: A good research paper title should contain key words used in the manuscript and should define the nature of the study. Think about terms people would use to search for your study and include them in your title.

Avoid: *Effects of drug A on schizophrenia patients: study of a multicenter mixed group*

Better: *Psychological effects of drug A on schizophrenia patients: a multicenter randomized controlled trial*



Avoid abbreviations and jargon: Known abbreviations such as AIDS, NATO, and so on can be used in the title. However, other lesser-known or specific abbreviations or jargon that would not be immediately familiar to the readers should be left out.

Avoid: *MMP expression profiles cannot distinguish between normal and early osteoarthritic synovial fluid*

Better: *Matrix metalloproteinase protein expression profiles cannot distinguish between normal and early osteoarthritic synovial fluid*

Inconsistency is the disorderly representation of a set of associated elements. However, a graver error than inconsistency is the forceful harmonization of elements that do not need to be made consistent—for example, gratuitous intervention to change parenthesis to square brackets for in-text citations.

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