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# 科研论文的标题---什么应该放入标题？

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作者们经常在做完研究，写好文章之后，却对如何写标题感到困扰。他们想把所知道的都放入标题中。标题可以很复杂，例如最近这个标题：Chiral Silver Phosphate Catalyzed Transformation of ortho-Alkynylaryl Ketones into 1H-Isochromene Derivatives through an Intramolecular-Cyclization/Enantioselective-Reduction Sequence.然而，我们想来看看什么样的信息适合放入标题中，如何写一个短点或长点的标题，以及要避免什么。

标题好比新闻提要。报纸的标题使用五个W和一个H，或者说是谁，什么，何时，何地，为什么，以及如何(who, what, when, where, why, and how)例如上一个标题，它告诉我们用了什么，发生了什么(磷酸银被催化)和如何发生的。在标题页上的作者姓名就是谁这部分，而其他信息就不需要在标题中出现。也就是说，何时，何地，为什么不是很重要。但是，我们将看看如何使用五个W和一个H来写一个好标题。

谁?对很多科研工作来说，谁指得是谁是这篇文章的作者。然而，对于某些研究领域，谁可能是作者所研究的人或人群。例如，Prevalence of High Body Mass Index in US Children and Adolescents, 2007 – 2008告诉我们谁是研究对象，何时的研究，在哪里进行的研究以及研究什么。为什么和如何在这里被认为不那么重要，因此没有在标题中提及。

什么?一个研究最重要的方面是研究内容，比如The earthly paradise: religious elements in Chinese landscape art. 这个标题告诉我们研究什么内容，尽管一看就知道艺术家是来自哪里，尽管我们不知道他们是为何而画又是如何画的，也不知道是什么时候完成画作的。

何时何地?Japanese concepts of child development from the mid-17th to mid-19th century告知读者这项研究涉及的时间和地点，以及讲述了研究的对象和研究内容。但是我们开始看出一点规律，为何与如何在标题中很少提及。???

为何与如何?Why do continents break up parallel to ancient orogenic belts? How do carbon nanotubes fit into the semiconductor roadmap?有时候，这五个W和一个H可以直接放进标题里。研究人员可以将标题以问句的形式来暗示文章是这个问题的答案

你可能已经猜到了，我们现在来考虑如何为你的研究选择一个好标题。科学研究浩如烟海，覆盖了社会学，经济学，物理学和生物化学等领域。对于我们而言，我们将假设我们的作者已经做了一些实地调研，收集和分析了数据，并编写了一篇文章，包括摘要，介绍，方法，结果，讨论和结论部分。这里提到这些是有原因的。每个部分都可能提供对标题有用的信息。摘要应该是最好的来源，因为它是文章的缩影，并且有一些讨论在里面。摘要中的介绍应该能够表达论文的重要

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性，读者会想知道数据是如何收集的，结果又是怎样的，这些都应该被包含在摘要中。摘要中还应包含结果以其重要性。现在的问题变成，我怎样才能将文章浓缩成一个简单的句子，词组或问题呢？

我将用生物研究作例子。有一种罕见的鸟，中华秋沙鸭，在中国中东部的江西省过冬。四名中国科学家在该地区进行实地调查，研究有多少只这种鸟在这一地区的江边居住。他们非常出色地在标题中回答了五个W和一个H代表的问题。通过他们的标题，我能知道，他们是在哪里研究了何种鸟类，以及何时进行的。他们没有说为何选择这种鸟类(也许是因为它们比较稀有)，没有提及谁做的研究(标题中有他们的名字)，也没有解释他们如何做研究。但读者可以猜测如何做的以及谁做的，很可能知道实地调查是如何研究的一部分。他们选了一个很好的标题：Wintering distribution and population size of scaly-sided Merganser, *Mergus squamatus*, in Jiangxi Province. 我也许还会加上China，但是他们是在地方性期刊发表，而不是在全球性期刊发表。如果我是在Journal of the Botanical Research Institute of Texas(原名为Sida)上发表，我就会加上China，因为这个杂志刊载的文章是面向全球读者的，而有些读者可能不知道江西在哪里。

下面我们来具体地看看如何写一个好的或坏的标题。是什么造就了好的标题?哪些是要避免的?上面列出的第一个标题和本文中所提及到的所有标题，都是来自已经被出版的文章。然而，虽然我是一个专业的编辑，还是让我想起了当我在大学时第一次阅读科学期刊的时候。我看了一些文章，心想，这简直不是英语。现在很多期刊都希望作者的文章能面向更广大的读者群，就是所有知识渊博，有扎实的教育背景的人，但不是与待发表的那篇论文在同一研究领域的专家。你的读者可能不具备和你相同的专业兴趣，但他们很可能读过很多书，受过良好教育，因此在许多情况下，你会希望你的标题是给一个相当普通的读者看的。作为一名生物学家，我知道磷酸盐是什么，我知道催化会使东西发生改变，我也知道第一个标题中有几个单词代表的是化合物，即便我不能写出酮的化学公式。下一次，我们将用一些真正的标题，改写一下，换一换主题，这样就不会被认出来也不会伤害到任何作者，然后谈谈如何选择一个好的标题，并且使其变得简洁明了。

毕竟，读者和期刊审稿人第一眼看到的很可能就是你的标题。你想使你的论文在期刊上发表，我们最先要做的就是获得一个好的第一印象。

#### Titles for Scientific Research Papers: Part I, What Goes into a Title?

Often, after conducting research and preparing a paper, authors feel confused about how to write a title. They feel tempted to include everything they know about the topic. Titles may be complex in valid ways such as this recent actual title: Chiral Silver Phosphate Catalyzed Transformation of ortho-Alkynylaryl Ketones into 1H-Isochromene Derivatives through an Intramolecular-Cyclization/ Enantioselective-Reduction Sequence. However, we want to look at what types of information belong in a title, to know how to keep a title short or long, and what pitfalls to avoid.

Titles can be compared to headlines. Newspaper headlines use The five W ' s and H, or concentrate on who, what, when, where, why, and how. For example, in the title shown above, the title tells what is used and what is happening (silver phosphate is being catalyzed) and how that happens. The who part would be the author ' s names that are on the title page with the title, and other information is not needed in the title.? That is, when, where, and why are not important in this case. However, we will look at how the five W ' s and H can be used to write a good title.

Who? For most scientific work, the who is, Who is the author of this paper? However, for some areas of

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research the who may be people or groups of people the author(s) have studied. For example, Prevalence of High Body Mass Index in US Children and Adolescents, 2007 – 2008 tells who was studied, when the study was done, where the study occurred, and what was studied. The why and how were considered less important and not mentioned.

What? The most important aspect of a study is what the research addressed such as The earthly paradise: religious elements in Chinese landscape art. This title mainly tells what was studied, although one can tell where the artists came from, a little about who they are), although we have no idea of how or why they painted, or when the artwork was done.

When and where? Japanese concepts of child development from the mid-17th to mid-19th century gives the reader an idea of when and where this study addresses, as well as tells about the who and what, but we begin to see a pattern. Why and how are less often discussed in titles.

Why and how? Why do continents break up parallel to ancient orogenic belts? How do carbon nanotubes fit into the semiconductor roadmap? Sometimes, the five W ' s and H can become part of the title. A researcher asks a question in a title that implies the article will provide an answer.

As you might have guessed, we will now consider how you can choose a good title for your study. Scientific research may cover a broad array of fields from sociology and economics to physics and biochemistry. For our purposes, we will assume our author has done some field research, collected and analyzed data, and prepared a paper with an abstract, introduction, methods, results, discussion, and conclusion section. Those are mentioned here for a reason. Each has the potential to provide information for a title. The abstract should be the best source because it should create a miniature paper and have those same discussions. The introduction within the abstract should tell why the paper is important. The reader will want to know how the data was collected and what the result were so those should be covered there too. The results and their importance should also be covered in the abstract. The question becomes, How can I condense this paper down to a single sentence, phrase, or question?

I ' m going to take a biological study as an example. A rare bird, the Scaly-sided Merganser, winters in Jiangxi Province in east central China. Four Chinese scientists conducted field surveys in an attempt to discover how many individuals of this species lived along the rivers in this region. They did an excellent job of answering the questions in their title, using some of the five Ws and H. By reading their title I can understand where they studied the birds and what they studied, when they conducted their field surveys. They do not say why they chose this species (probably because it is rare), who did the study (their names are in the title), or explain how they did the study, but the reader can guess the why and who and probably knows they used field studies as part of the how. They chose a good title: Wintering distribution and population size of scaly-sided Merganser, *Mergus squamatus*, in Jiangxi Province. I might have added , China but they published in a regional journal rather than for a global audience. However, if I was publishing in Journal of the Botanical Research Institute of Texas (formerly known as Sida), I would have added China because that particular journal publishes for a global audience who might not know where Jiangxi is.

Next time, we will get a little more specific and look at how to write a good or a bad title. What makes a good title? What are the pitfalls to avoid? For example, the first title listed above is a real published title, as are all titles in this article. However, even though I ' m a professional editor, it reminds me of my experience when I first read scientific journals in college. I looked at a few papers and thought, This isn ' t even English. Many

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journals today state they want authors to write for a general audience, people who are knowledgeable and have a solid educational background, but who are not specialists in the field of study for a particular research paper. Your readers many not have your specialized interest, but they probably are well-read and educated, so you will want your titled targeted at a fairly general audience in many cases. As a biologist, I know what phosphate is, I can understand that catalyzing something will transform it and I know that several words in that first title deal with chemicals even if I cannot draw the chemical formula for a ketone. Next time, we will take some real titles, paraphrase them so we don ' t hurt any author ' s feelings by changing the topic so it is no longer recognizable, and talk about how you can choose a good title and how to make it nice and concise.

After all, the very first thing a reader and a journal reviewer are likely to see is your title. You want to sell your paper to the journal to get it published. We want to start out with a good first impression.

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