

Kirkman, J.: **Good Style. Writing for Science and Technology.** - E & FN Spon, London - Weinheim - New York - Tokyo - Melbourne - Madras 1992. ISBN 0 419 17190 8. 221 pp., GBP 12.99.

The book (published 1992, reprinted 1994, 1995, 1996) was written by an experienced teacher and consultant in all fields of scientific communication. He has lectured in both the U.K. and the U.S.A., and has written numerous papers and textbooks on this subject.

The reviewed textbook contains eight chapters and six supplements. The chapters discuss choices of vocabulary, phrasing, and sentence structure appropriate for scientific and technical papers. Chapter 2 deals with (and shows in many examples) the choice of style, length, and complexity of sentences, choice of words and terms, improper use of jargon, "fashionable" words, and unusual phrases, excessive pre-modification of expressions, abstract phrasing, excessive use of nouns, errors in tense of verbs, impersonal constructions, omissions of punctuation, *etc.* Chapter 3 is on distorted English in computer-related texts. Chapter 4 deals with proper style for instructions and procedures, and chapter 5 with style for descriptions and explanatory writing. Chapter 6 shows how to write brief, clear, friendly, and personal business letters. For native speakers of English, chapter 7 is of great importance: it shows on two examples from technical writing in French the difficulties international audience may have: they arise not only in specialist terminology, but also in structural complexity of sentences, use of words that have several meanings, mis-related phrases, omission of punctuation, and even in the ordinary language. Chapter 9 is on avoiding ambiguity in technical writing.

The appendices present texts specialised in four various fields: chemical engineering, ecology, biochemistry, and technical manuals. The same content is always presented in six versions, all of them in correct English, but written in different styles (personal, impersonal, active, passive, direct, clear, brief, woolly, with few or many special terms, *etc.*). These examples are useful teaching aid for courses of good style of writing. Results of some surveys of these texts are shown.

The list of references contains 38 items, a good subject index is also supplemented. The book may be recommended to those who would like to brush up their scientific or technical writing, not to novices in scientific communication.

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