Matthews, J.R., Bowen, J.M., Matthews, R.W.: **Successful Scientific Writing**. – Cambridge University Press, Cambridge – New York – Melbourne 1996 (reprint 1998). ISBN 0-521-55948-0. XIII + 181 pp., GBP 15.95, USD 20.95.

There exist many textbooks showing how to write scientific papers. Let me state just at the beginning that the reviewed textbook belongs to the best ones. This is confirmed by the fact that it has already been reprinted twice. Its eight chapters teach the reader systematically how to plan the paper, prepare the first draft, support the text with tables, photographs, and other visual aids, produce the second draft, fix the format of manuscript, correct its spelling and grammar, express ideas simply and concisely, make the paper readable and interesting, and submit the final paper for publication.

The authors work in veterinary medicine or entomology and therefore many examples are from these fields of research. Nevertheless, their experience in publishing and editing is very large (the first author is a biomedical editor) and therefore the book is full of practical recommendations and examples. The authors work in the USA (The University of Georgia), nevertheless, they compare both the American and English usage and spelling. Each chapter is supplemented by exercises (4 to 40 per chapter) and the Appendix 1 contains recommended responses to the questions. Another practical aid is "Practising mixed corrections" on pp. 140-141. The chapters are divided into parts with special titles and thus the orientation in the text is very easy. The texts are readable, contain many examples, and some chapters are supplemented with pieces of comic strips on topics connected with publishing (on pp. 31, 68, 110, and 152). "A Dozen Fumblegrammar Rules For Scientists" on p. 96 should be posted in every laboratory. The recommendation "Query the editor, if needed" (p. 11) is very important similar to "Using a word processor to write more efficiently" (pp. 20-25), "String of pearls" (pp. 117-119), and other recommendations.

I did not find many offprint and inaccurate explanations (one is on p. 8: impact factor is based also on citations in the same journal, not only "in other publications", and only the journals documented by the Institute of Scientific Information are evaluated for this purpose).

Appendix 2 is a summary of uniform requirements for manuscripts submitted to biomedical journals. However, many other journals announce similar requirements. The book is supplemented with a list of 71 selected references (mainly textbooks) and a good subject index. The ring binding of the book facilitates reading.

Even if we agree with Darwin that "a naturalist's life would be a happy one if he had only to observe and never to write" (used as a motto to chapter 1) unfortunately the "Publish or perish!" motto leads the lives of scientists. Therefore the reviewed textbook will certainly be welcome by both students and teachers.

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