

# Rules for writing manuscripts

Follow these rules when working with me on manuscripts. I, the reviewers, and your future colleagues, will thank you.

- Read and follow *The Elements of Style, Fourth Edition* by Strunk, White, and Angell.
- Use LaTeX. Any other word-processor I have seen is woefully inferior at formatting mathematics.
- Familiarize yourself with the macros in `MASTER.tex` (and `SEMINAR.tex`, if you are working on a presentation).
- Before deciding you need a new entry in my bibtex database, `ALL.bib`, make sure it is not there already.
- If a new entry is needed in `ALL.bib`, send it to me with all the required fields and I will add it.
- Be consistent in your wording. For example, in the same paper, you should not use “local spaces”, “subspaces”, “sub-spaces”, and “local state spaces” to mean the same concept. Only “local state spaces” is correct. Variety might be the spice of life, but, in a scientific paper, this type of variety is not a good thing and only leads to confusion.
- Be absolutely consistent with fonts, even between text and figures. In `tgif`, for example, be sure to use italic, roman, and bold for a symbol the same way it is used in the text; also, be sure to use the `NewCenturySchlbk` font if the document is using the standard LaTeX fonts, and `Times` if the document is using the `psfonts` (which often save a little space, but always look worse, in my opinion).
- Learn to use `tgif` to its fullest power. This includes knowing how to align objects, when to use a white fill or no fill, etc. Almost always you should have `Snap to grid` on. Almost never you should have `Stretch text` on. Arcs in a graph should *not* be drawn as a sector of an arc. Eschew sloppy pictures!
- As you iterate on the file and get closer to submitting, avoid as much as possible changing the text needlessly; your coauthors will want to run a `diff` on the files you edited, and needless changes make it much harder to understand the essential changes.
- As you iterate on the file and get closer to submitting, realize that, often, several very small wording changes can cause huge differences in the final page count. I rarely have had to cut “substance” from a paper to make it fit into the allowed page count. Usually, careful rewording is sufficient, and, as a bonus, the resulting English is often better. Keep an eye on that page count, but only as you get close to submitting!
- In a LaTeX file: keep lines to no more than 80 characters whenever possible; don’t leave blank characters at the end of a line; go to the next line after each “.” or “;”, even if this means having short lines (this makes it *much* easier to visually search for a pattern in a block of text when editing); always leave whitespace before a `\cite` command; type quotes like ‘`‘this’`’, not like `"this"`, since “this” looks good, but `"this"` does not.
- Use `\emph` to emphasize a term you define, but only the first time you use the term (at times, you need to deviate a little from this rule since it is rarely appropriate to define a term in the abstract, and it might not be appropriate to define a term in the introduction).
- A similar rule applies to the definition of acronyms. But be sure to define an acronym only if it is really needed. Too many acronyms can seriously hinder readability.
- Any figure or table you define within a `figure` or `table` environment must have a caption and must be referenced at least once in the text (of course this does not hold for presentations).
- Never use hardcoded numbers for references! Use the following standard: `\label{FIG:xxx}` for figures; `\label{TAB:xxx}` for tables; `\label{SEC:xxx}` for chapters, sections, subsections, etc.; `\label{STA:xxx}` for statements in pseudocode.
- Don’t be sloppy! Regularly run spell-checks! Be proud of your manuscript!