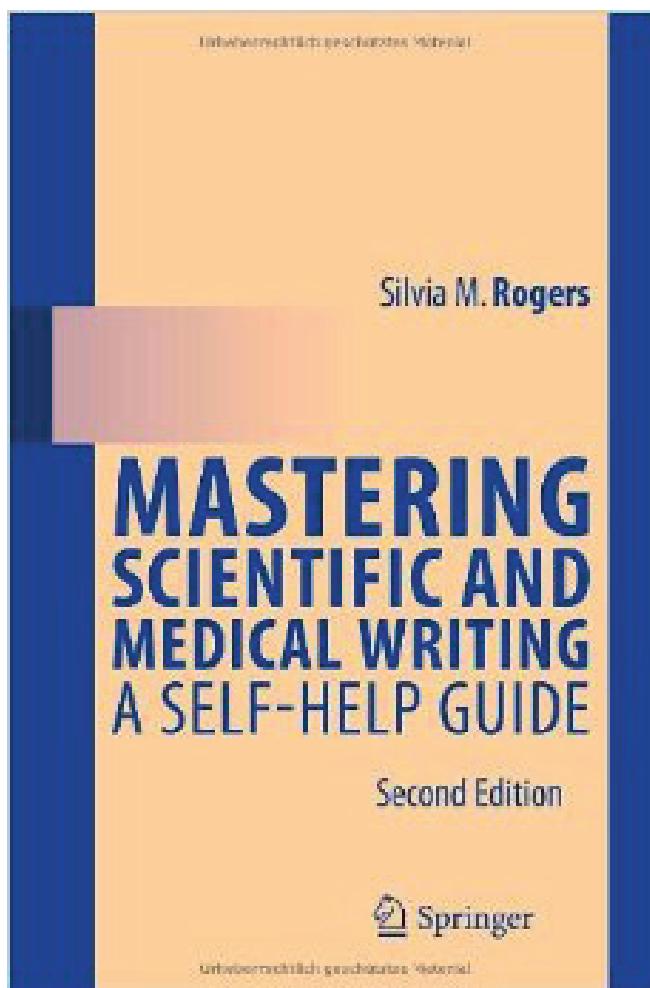


Caveat emptor: the second edition of *Mastering Scientific and Medical Writing: a Self-Help Guide*

John Giba*

ROGERS, SILVIA (2014): *Mastering Scientific and Medical Writing: a Self-Help Guide* (2.^a ed.). Berlin/Heidelberg: Springer; 116 pp. ISBN: 978-3-642-39445-4 (tapa blanda); 978-3-642-39446-1 (libro electrónico). Precio: 31,19 EUR (tapa blanda); 23,79 EUR (libro electrónico).



If you liked the first edition of *Mastering Scientific and Medical Writing: a Self-Help Guide*, you will surely like the second edition — but that doesn't mean you should run out and buy it. The blurb «This second edition takes into account new developments in the area of scientific communication. In particular, the importance of authenticity is addressed, drawing attention to the sensitive

issue of plagiarism in scientific texts» might be misleading, but it is not dishonest.

Over 95% of the second edition is identical to the first, but then the last seven years have seen no great changes in the style of language best suited to scientific communication. Additionally, concerns about plagiarism in its varied forms have certainly become more prominent over this period, although the palpable fear of being accused of plagiarism the author notes in her students is probably an exaggeration.

The five pages that are new to the second edition attempt to explain what plagiarism is, the forms it can take, and how to avoid it. One gets the impression, however, that the author does not feel completely comfortable with this subject; her ideas about what constitutes plagiarism are not as clear cut as those she professes in other sections of the book, and the advice she gives about how to avoid plagiarism seem to lack conviction and authority. This insecurity is reflected in the paucity of examples and lack of exercises for this section. Thus, apart from heightening our awareness of potential problems, the author's greatest service to her readers is to point us to (hopefully) more informative or authoritative sources and to recommend using plagiarism-detection software.

Nevertheless, this second edition of *Mastering Scientific and Medical Writing* can help scientific and medical professionals and students who do not have access to the first edition improve their writing skills. Although the book specifically targets those whose first language is not English, it should be equally useful to native English speakers. Unlike books that analyze and prescribe the use of language, this book shows us how to apply our knowledge of the language to scientific communication.

The author, a PhD in pharmacology with extensive experience in writing and editing scientific texts as well as in training others to write, helps us understand what good writing is by dispelling myths and misconceptions that hinder communication. She advocates clear and concise plain language, showing us how to communicate more effectively. The book explains key concepts related to writing well and illustrates them with instructive examples. Especially interesting are the parts dealing with how to express numbers in various circumstances, which verb tenses to use to communicate different kinds of information, and how to avoid the most common errors related to parallelism, syntax, and punctuation. Best of all, the book includes twelve exercises where we can put this theoretical knowledge into practice. Those who read this book and do the exercises are certain to improve their writing skills.

In science and technology, the vertiginous rate of advancement often necessitates new editions of books to

* Redactor, Sentmenat (Barcelona, España). Dirección para correspondencia: john_giba@yahoo.com.

bring their contents up to date. However, other factors may also come into play in a publisher's decision to release a new edition. Businesses have long exploited our penchant for the new to sell us their products; indeed, «new and improved» is probably the most firmly established advertising cliché. Innovations like e-books, print-on-

demand, and internet sales allow publishers to market some products, like second and successive editions, without the risk of large capital outlays for production and distribution, thus improving the all-important bottom line. In this scenario, it pays to investigate what's between the covers before buying a book.

El Diccionari de criteris terminològics*

TERMCAT

El TERMCAT ha publicat en línia el *Diccionari de criteris terminològics*, amb l'objectiu de recollir en un sol producte i adaptats a un mateix format tots els criteris relacionats amb la terminologia que ha anat publicant en apartats diferents del web.

Es tracta d'un conjunt de partida de més de 150 fitxes de criteris, classificades en **criteris d'especialitat** (que recomanen una forma catalana en termes concrets, com ara *Pronúncia i grafia de ebola*), **criteris lingüístics** (que afecten conjunts de termes, per exemple *Traducció del prefix anglès e-*) i **criteris metodològics** (que proposen tractaments concrets per als diccionaris terminològics, com ara *Representació de les formes femenines*).

L'estructura del diccionari permet fer-hi consultes per llengües, per exemples i per tipus de criteris, a més de consultes sobre formes concretes.

El TERMCAT es compromet a mantenir sempre actualitzat aquest diccionari i a afegir-hi periòdicament els criteris de nova aparició, de manera que pugui servir com a eina única per a consultar-hi els criteris que el Centre utilitza en el treball terminològic. D'aquesta manera, ofereix a tothom que hi estigui interessat les eines adequades per a poder decidir autònomament quina solució pot ser la més convenient davant d'un dubte terminològic complex.

El *Diccionari de criteris terminològics* s'incorpora a la col·lecció de *Diccionaris en Línia*, que ofereix més de setanta repertoris terminològics especialitzats.

© TERMCAT, Centro de Terminología <www.termcat.cat>

* El texto procede de un apunte publicado previamente por TERMCAT en su [sitio web](#) en forma de comentario terminológico breve, en catalán. Los casos escogidos para su publicación en *Panace@* se centran en términos y criterios del ámbito de las ciencias de la vida y la salud.

