ETH

Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule Zürich
Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich

ETH Library
Information and Learning Environments

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Revising scientific texts – Checklist

Tips

> → Check whether you have complied with the conventions of your subject and the type of text.
>
> → Print out the text and use a ruler to help you read through your text carefully in detail.
>
> → Print out your text again once you have revised it and reread it – even if you have to submit it in electronic form.
>
> → Read your text out loud to yourself.
>
> → Ask for feedback on your text.
>
> → Plan 20 to 30 % of your time budget for revising the text, taking care of the layout and publishing.

CONTENT / OUTLINE

Aspects to consider	To do	Deadline
Does the text include all the necessary parts?		
Do the text parts fulfil their respective function?		
Is the text quantity and length of the individual chapters and sections reasonably balanced?		
Are all the necessary appendices and indexes included? (detailed data, supplementary material, abbreviations, figures, tables, glossary, questionnaire, declaration of originality, etc.)		
Does the title page include all the necessary details?		
Do the headings reflect the chapter and section content?		
Are all headings listed correctly in the table of contents?		
Are the page numbers listed correctly in the table of contents?		

TEXT / READING GUIDANCE

Aspects to consider	To do	Deadline
Are the individual chapters and sections linked and referenced coherently both in terms of content and style?		
Does the use of language in my text support its content and outline?		

	To do	Deadline
Are the individual chapters and sections correctly and optimally structured in terms of content?		
Have I kept to the rule of thumb of one piece of information or idea per paragraph?		
Given any lack of contextual coherence, have I introduced new thoughts/ideas by means of a new paragraph?		
As a test, would I be able to use one word to describe the content of each paragraph?		
Does each chapter have a short introduction, main part and conclusion (without naming them as such)?		
Do individual sections require a short introduction and/or summary?		
I have switched text passages around: Are my references still correct? Are the passages still linked coherently in terms of content and language?		
Can I avoid a repetition of content by covering it in a single paragraph?		
Have I fully explained all my illustrations and figures?		
Have I referred to figures, etc. in the text?		
Are the chapter, figure and page number references in the text correct?		
Which sections can be presented in list or table format?		
Which findings can be (additionally) presented in a chart?		

CITATIONS / LEGAL ASPECTS

Aspects to consider	To do	Deadline
Have I used the preferred citation style in my subject area?		
Have I used the citation style correctly and consistently?		
Are my bibliographical details complete?		
Are all source references included in both the text and in the bibliography?		
Do sources referred to in the text have corresponding references in the bibliography?		
If used several times in the text, are the references consistent?		
Does the bibliography only list items that are actually mentioned in the text?		
Does the bibliography only list items that I have actually read myself?		
Are all technical terms defined and sources provided as necessary?		
Have I clarified all rights? (also of images, graphics, videos, etc.)		
Do all figures have captions?		
Do readers understand whether I am expressing my own opinion or research findings or those of a third party?		
Are all citations in quotation marks?		

Have I paraphrased content correctly, fairly, objectively and provided the necessary context?		
Have I adequately prefaced and linguistically integrated all citations and paraphrases into the text?		
Have I supported my research findings and data with logical arguments (evidence)?		
Have I underpinned my own arguments, data, findings, etc. with external facts, citations, etc.?		

Topic Tips

ETH Zurich	Plagiarism[1] and Citation etiquette[2]
Cite Them Right	Online referencing tool[3]
Technical University of Munich (TUM)	TUM Citation Guide[4]
Saxon State and University Library (SLUB) Dresden	Citations and avoiding plagiarism – When, why, and how to cite sources? [5]
University of Applied Sciences and Arts Northwestern Switzerland (FHNW)	Handreichung. Quellenangaben und Zitate in wissenschaftlichen Texten[6] ("Handout. References and citations in scientific texts", in German)
Scribbr	Plagiarism[7]
Wikipedia	– List of style guides[8] – Citation[9]

LANGUAGE

Aspects to consider	To do	Deadline
Am I using the academic language of my subject area correctly?		
Am I using the correct terms?		
Do I always use the terms in the same way?		
Do I use appropriate phrases?		
Are the verbs and adjectives I use appropriate to an academic context?		
Do I use synonyms effectively?		
Do I use synonyms sparingly and by doing so, avoid ambiguity?		
Are the abbreviations I use understandable? Do I always use the same abbreviations?		
Which filler words can I delete?		
Which words do I use too often and can I delete?		
Welche Gedanken kann ich auch mit weniger Wörtern ausdrücken?		
Are there any redundancies that I can eliminate?		
Do I use gender-neutral language?		
Is it always clear as to what a pronoun refers?		

Aspects to consider	To do	Deadline
Is the verb in the plural when a noun is in the plural?		
Have I checked the grammar in my text?		
Have I checked the spelling in my text?		
Have I checked the punctuation in my text?		
Do I use British or American English consistently?		

Topic Tips

Manchester Phrase Bank		[Database with phrases for academic papers](#)[10]

TYPOGRAPHY / FORMATTING / LAYOUT

Aspects to consider	To do	Deadline
Have I split words correctly at the end of sentences?		
Have I used type style(s) consistently?		
Have I used type size(s) consistently? (headings, text, captions, etc.)		
Is the line spacing correct?		
Are the margins correct?		
Is the text fully paginated and the page numbers in the right place?		
Are there any spaces that need to be deleted?		
Have I used dashes and hyphens consistently?		
Have I indented consistently?		
Have I used bullets consistently?		
Have I used quotation marks and periods consistently?		
Have I used emphases consistently?		
Have I used justified or unjustified text consistently?		
Are all illustrations numbered consecutively?		
Are all numbers, equations, units of measurement, etc. written correctly?		
Are page breaks set at appropriate places in the text?		
Is the layout of the text consistent?		
Are the figures also legible when printed out?		
Which paper specifications do I have to comply with?		
What are the binding requirements?		

PUBLISHING

→ The ETH supports you in all aspects of <u>electronic publishing</u>[11].

→ Comply to the guidelines, requirements and checklists of

- ETH Zurich regarding ethics, technology transfer and export control
- the research funders
- the journal and/or publisher

General tips on scientific writing

ETH Library	<u>Scientific writing</u>[12]
Technische Universität Dresden	Writing Centre: <u>Material and Tips</u>[13]
University of Edinburgh	<u>Learning resources</u>[14]
University of Toronto	<u>Writing Advice</u>[15]
Purdue University	<u>Online Writing Lab</u>[16]
George Mason University	<u>Writing Center Quick Guides</u>[17]
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	<u>Writing Center: Tips and Tools</u>[18] + <u>Learning Center Tips & Tools</u>[19]
University of South Australia	<u>Online resources for research proposal writing</u>[20]
Scribbr	<u>Knowledge Base</u>[21]

ETH Library, Dr Christine Bärtsch, version: 1 December 2022

[1] https://ethz.ch/students/en/studies/performance-assessments/plagiarism.html
[2] https://ethz.ch/content/dam/ethz/main/education/rechtliches-abschluesse/leistungskontrollen/plagiarism-citationetiquette.pdf
[3] https://www.citethemrightonline.com/
[4] https://mediatum.ub.tum.de/doc/1236069/1236069.pdf
[5] https://bildungsportal.sachsen.de/opal/auth/RepositoryEntry/28169863172/CourseNode/98267014615921
[6] https://www.schreiben.zentrumlesen.ch/myUploadData/files/handreichung_quellenangaben_zitate_ph_fhnw.pdf
[7] https://www.scribbr.com/category/plagiarism/
[8] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_style_guides
[9] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Citation
[10] www.phrasebank.manchester.ac.uk
[11] https://library.ethz.ch/en/publishing-and-archiving/publishing-and-registering.html
[12] https://library.ethz.ch/en/publishing-and-archiving/writing-managing-references/scientific-writing-at-eth-zurich.html
[13] https://tu-dresden.de/karriere/weiterbildung/zentrum-fuer-weiterbildung/schreibzentrum/materialien-tipps
[14] https://www.ed.ac.uk/institute-academic-development/study-hub/learning-resources
[15] https://advice.writing.utoronto.ca/
[16] https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/purdue_owl.html
[17] https://writingcenter.gmu.edu/writing-resources
[18] https://writingcenter.unc.edu/tips-and-tools/
[19] https://learningcenter.unc.edu/tips-and-tools/
[20] https://lo.unisa.edu.au/course/view.php?id=6744&sectionid=112329
[21] https://www.scribbr.com/knowledge-base/