5 RULES FOR SCIENCE WRITING

1. **Avoid unnecessary jargon and acronyms.** Write out key words in your text rather than the acronym (unless it’s familiar to a large audience, such as DNA, RNA, etc.)

   **Jargon:** One hour prior to the experiment, we made meticulous observations of the collected samples of tissues for evidence of the formation of biofilms.

   **Revised:** One hour prior to the experiment, we observed our collected tissue samples for the presence of biofilms.

2. **Be specific.**

   **Vague:** We observed biofilms on some of the tissue samples.

   **Specific:** We observed that biofilms formed on 17 of the 22 tissue samples collected from equine wounds.

3. **Use a strong, active voice.** (Exception for active voice: in the materials and methods section, it’s preferable to use passive voice.)

   **Passive:** All tissue samples were observed and tested for the presence of biofilms.

   **Active:** We observed and tested the tissue samples for the presence of biofilms.

4. **Don’t bury your verbs.** (Keep verbs close to the subject of the sentence to help readability. Note the distance between the subject and verb in the example below.)

   **Buried verb:** Therefore, bacterial biofilms, containing huge populations of microbes, that develop on the wounds of thoroughbreds, especially wounds on the lower limbs, may explain why some wounds take longer to heal.

   **Closer subject and verb:** The presence of biofilms on equine wounds may explain why some wounds take longer to heal.

5. **Avoid any clutter in your sentences.** (repetition, unimportant information, and unnecessarily long phrases)

   **Wordy:** Over the years, research has continued to show that bacterial biofilms, occurring on the wounds of both humans and animals, slow the amount of time it takes for a wound to heal.

   **Concise:** Biofilms slow the healing rate of wounds in both humans and animals.