

# Style Guide: Hints to help make your article easy to read

## Ways to Improve the Structure of Your Article

- Do not be afraid to use the first person. For example

We hypothesised that **is better than** It was hypothesised  
I recruited interviewees **is better than** The researcher recruited interviewees  
We found that **is better than** It was found that

- Short words and sentences are always best, for example

<b>use</b>	<b>rather than</b>
in	within
on	upon
use	utilize
maintaining	the maintenance of
developing	the development of
about	in relation to, with regard to, etc
it seems that	it would seem that

- Use plurals to avoid repetition and awkward phrases. For example

Nurses should always ask patients to give their consent before starting to give care

**is better than:**

The nurse should always ask the patient to give his/her consent before starting to give care

- When you have written your article, read it aloud. This will help you to

check the punctuation  
check that it makes sense

- Reading it aloud will also help you to find and remove all unnecessary examples of 'the'. This makes the article 'move along' in a livelier way. For example:

Nurses developed good relationships with patients

**is better than**

The nurses developed good relationships with the patients

- Reading it aloud will also help you to find and remove awkward repetitions. For example

Women told us that their symptoms were improved and those in the intervention group reported less fatigue.

**is better than**

Women told us that their symptoms were improved and women in the intervention group reported less fatigue.

- Invite a colleague to read your article and provide a critical appraisal on your style of presentation.

## International Readership

- Remember that JCN is an international journal - explain things that may be specific to your own country or culture, for example

use	avoid
emergency call	code
clinical nurse manager	F grade

- Avoid jargon. For example

use	avoid
doctors /physicians	medics
endoscopes	scopes
Registered Nurse	D grade

## Use of Abbreviations

- Explain abbreviations the first time you use them, for example

National Service Framework (NSF)  
 National Health Service Executive (NHSE)  
 Coronary artery bypass graft (CABG)

**Some of these may be obvious to you, but not to someone working in another specialty or from a different country.**

For example the WHO is the OMS to a French or Portuguese speaker!

World Health Organisation  
 Organisation Mondiale de la Santé (French)  
 Organização Mundial da Saúde (Portuguese)

**You can find more hints in**

Plain English Campaign. A-Z of alternative words. Plain English Campaign, New Mills. (available at [www.plainenglish.co.uk/A-Z.html](http://www.plainenglish.co.uk/A-Z.html))

Silverman J 1998 Skills for communicating with patients. Radcliffe Medical Press, Oxford

Turnbull A 2001 Plain Words for Nurses: Writing and Communicating Effectively. Foundation of Nursing Studies, London