

SPRINGER  PUBLISHING COMPANY

WRITING FOR PUBLICATION IN NURSING

FOURTH EDITION



MARILYN H. OERMANN
JUDITH C. HAYS

WRITING FOR PUBLICATION IN NURSING

MARILYN H. OERMANN, PhD, RN, ANEF, FAAN, is the Thelma M. Ingles Professor of Nursing and Director of Evaluation and Educational Research at Duke University School of Nursing, Durham, North Carolina. She is author/coauthor of 21 books and many articles on evaluation, teaching in nursing, and writing for publication. She is the editor of *Nurse Educator* and the *Journal of Nursing Care Quality*. She lectures widely on teaching and evaluation in nursing and on writing for publication. Dr. Oermann received the Margaret Comerford Freda Award for Editorial Leadership in Nursing from the International Academy of Nursing Editors.

JUDITH C. HAYS, PhD, RN, FGSA, is Associate Professor Emerita at Duke University School of Nursing, Durham, North Carolina. She is author/coauthor of a psychiatric epidemiology textbook and more than 70 scientific articles on late-life living arrangements, religiousness, depression, palliative care and bereavement, and nursing history. She is coeditor emeritus of the journal *Public Health Nursing*. Dr. Hays edits the scientific writing of faculty in baccalaureate, master's, and doctor of nursing practice (DNP) programs.

WRITING FOR PUBLICATION IN NURSING

FOURTH EDITION

Marilyn H. Oermann, PhD, RN, ANEF, FAAN

Judith C. Hays, PhD, RN, FGSA

Copyright © 2019 Springer Publishing Company, LLC

All rights reserved.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the prior permission of Springer Publishing Company, LLC, or authorization through payment of the appropriate fees to the Copyright Clearance Center, Inc., 222 Rosewood Drive, Danvers, MA 01923, 978-750-8400, fax 978-646-8600, info@copyright.com or on the Web at www.copyright.com.

Springer Publishing Company, LLC
11 West 42nd Street
New York, NY 10036
www.springerpub.com

Acquisitions Editor: Adrienne Brigido
Compositor: diacriTech, Chennai

ISBN: 978-0-8261-4701-1
ebook ISBN: 978-0-8261-4721-9
Instructor's Manual ISBN: 978-0-8261-4702-8
Instructor's PowerPoint ISBN: 978-0-8261-4703-5

Instructor's Materials: Qualified instructors may request supplements by emailing textbook@springerpub.com

18 19 20 21 22 / 5 4 3 2 1

The author and the publisher of this Work have made every effort to use sources believed to be reliable to provide information that is accurate and compatible with the standards generally accepted at the time of publication. The author and publisher shall not be liable for any special, consequential, or exemplary damages resulting, in whole or in part, from the readers' use of, or reliance on, the information contained in this book. The publisher has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party Internet websites referred to in this publication and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Oermann, Marilyn H., author. | Hays, Judith C., author.

Title: Writing for publication in nursing / Marilyn H. Oermann, Judith C. Hays.

Description: Fourth edition. | New York, NY : Springer Publishing Company, LLC, [2018] | Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2018013503 | ISBN 9780826147011

Subjects: | MESH: Medical Writing | Periodicals as Topic | Publishing | Nurses' Instruction

Classification: LCC RT24 | NLM WZ 345 | DDC 808/.06661—dc23

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2018013503>

Contact us to receive discount rates on bulk purchases.
We can also customize our books to meet your needs.
For more information please contact: sales@springerpub.com

Printed in the United States of America.

CONTENTS

<i>Contributor to the Third Edition</i>	<i>vii</i>
<i>Preface</i>	<i>ix</i>
<i>Share Writing for Publication in Nursing, Fourth Edition</i>	

SECTION I: PREPARING TO WRITE

1. Getting Started	3
2. Selecting a Journal	17
3. Authorship and Preparing to Write	31
4. Reviewing the Literature	45

SECTION II: WRITING RESEARCH, EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICE, QUALITY IMPROVEMENT, AND CLINICAL PRACTICE ARTICLES

5. Writing Research Articles	87
6. Review and Evidence-Based Practice Articles	135
7. Articles Reporting Quality Improvement Studies	157
8. Clinical Practice Articles	167

SECTION III: CHAPTERS, BOOKS, AND OTHER FORMS OF WRITING

9. Other Types of Writing	187
10. Books and Book Chapters	201

SECTION IV: THE WRITING PROCESS

11. Writing Process	215
12. References	253
13. Tables and Figures	265

SECTION V: FINAL PAPER THROUGH PUBLICATION

14. Final Paper and Submission to Journal	285
15. Editorial Review Process	299

16. Publishing Process	327
17. Open Access and Avoiding Predatory Journals	339

APPENDICES

<i>Appendix A: Selected Statistical Symbols and Abbreviations</i>	351
<i>Appendix B: Unnecessary Words in Writing</i>	353
<i>Appendix C: Guidelines and Resources for Preparing Manuscripts</i>	355
<i>Index</i>	357

CONTRIBUTOR TO THE THIRD EDITION

Jeffrey Beall, MA, MSLS

Scholarly Communications Librarian, Auraria Library

Associate Professor, University of Colorado Denver

Denver, Colorado

PREFACE

Writing for publication in nursing is essential to disseminate evidence, share initiatives and innovations with others, provide new information to keep nurses up to date, communicate the findings of research studies, and develop the science base of the profession. Writing manuscripts is hard work, but the process can be simplified by understanding how to develop a manuscript and submit it for publication. *Writing for Publication in Nursing*, now in its fourth edition, was prepared for beginning and experienced authors, for nurses, and for graduate students in nursing to guide them in writing literature reviews, research reports, quality improvement and clinical articles, and other types of papers.

This book describes the process of writing, beginning with an idea, searching the literature, preparing an outline, writing a draft and revising it, and developing the final paper. How to select a journal and gear the writing to the intended audience, submit a manuscript to a journal, revise a paper and respond to reviewers, and carry out other steps to facilitate publication are discussed in the book. A chapter is devoted to writing research articles to assist nurses in preparing their work for publication; strategies are included for developing manuscripts from theses and dissertations. Other chapters describe principles for writing quality improvement articles and preparing articles that disseminate the outcomes of reviews of research evidence, articles on clinical practice topics and evidence-based practice (EBP), case reports, and chapters and books. The book serves as a reference for students at all levels of nursing education to guide them in writing papers for courses. Many nursing programs expect students to demonstrate competency in writing as an outcome of the program. *Writing for Publication in Nursing* is a good resource for that purpose. Graduate students in particular can use the book to learn how to write for publication—an essential skill for advanced practice nurses, researchers, educators, administrators, and nurses in other roles to disseminate their work and for their career advancement.

Writing for Publication in Nursing can be used in conjunction with the style manual in the nursing program. While style manuals direct students in preparing citations, references, tables, and figures, and guide them on other aspects of style, these manuals do not teach students the process of writing or how to prepare a paper for publication in nursing.

This book contains many examples and resources for writing in nursing and other healthcare professions. These resources make writing easier for both novice and experienced authors.

SECTION I: PREPARING TO WRITE

Writing for publication is essential to disseminate the findings of research and evidence for practice, communicate knowledge and share expertise with other nurses, inform nurses of initiatives and innovations developed for patient populations and settings, and advance the profession. Chapter 1 introduces the steps the author follows in planning, writing, and publishing manuscripts in nursing. The focus is on early writing decisions, such as generating ideas, selecting a topic, and deciding on the type of article to be written. The author evaluates if the ideas to be presented are new, are worth writing about, and are important enough to be published.

The next steps are to identify the audience to whom the manuscript will be directed and to select a journal that might be interested in publishing it. The purpose of the manuscript and how it will be developed guide the author in deciding on possible journals. The goal is to match the topic and type of manuscript with an appropriate journal and readers who would be interested in it. Chapter 2 discusses how to evaluate possible journals, select an appropriate one, and write a query email to gauge the interest of the editor of the journal. Valuable resources in this chapter include a description of online directories of journals for searching for a potential journal and a sample query email.

Decisions about the focus of the manuscript, audience, and journal are important early in the writing process. Other decisions pertain to authorship; if these are not made before beginning the writing project, they may create problems and conflict among the authors later on. Each individual designated as an author on a manuscript or other type of paper should have contributed sufficiently to it. Chapter 3 addresses authorship and author responsibilities in preparing to write. Because many papers are written in groups, strategies are provided to facilitate this process.

Chapter 4 prepares the author for reviewing the literature and writing a literature review for a manuscript and other types of papers. Although literature reviews for research studies, academic papers, evidence syntheses, and other purposes vary in the types of literature used, their comprehensiveness, and how they are summarized for the reader, the process of reviewing the literature is the same. Chapter 4 describes bibliographic databases useful for literature reviews in nursing, selecting databases to use, search strategies, analyzing and synthesizing the literature, and writing the literature review. This chapter provides many resources to help nurse authors with their literature reviews. Strategies to avoid plagiarism and information about obtaining permission to reproduce copyrighted material in a manuscript are included in the chapter.

SECTION II: WRITING RESEARCH, EPB, QUALITY IMPROVEMENT, AND CLINICAL PRACTICE ARTICLES

Research projects are not complete until the findings are communicated to others. All too often nurses conduct important research studies but fail to disseminate the results of their work. Some nurses are not prepared for their role as an author and are unsure how to proceed; others may believe that their work does not warrant publication. However, rigorous research is important to communicate to others, regardless of whether the findings were anticipated or not. Research papers present the findings of quantitative and qualitative research based on original data. Chapter 5 begins with a discussion of how to report research using the conventional format of an introduction and literature review; a methods section, including design and sample, measurements, and analytic strategy; a results section; and a discussion. This basic structure of research articles is known as IMRAD, that is, **I**ntroduction, **M**ethods, **R**esults, and **D**iscussion. Examples are provided of quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods research articles for authors to learn how to write different sections of these manuscripts, as well as reporting guidelines such as the Consolidated Standards of Reporting Trials (CONSORT). Ethical considerations when writing research papers include deciding the appropriate number of articles to write from a single study and avoidance of redundant or duplicate publications. Authors should take care to protect the privacy rights of their subjects. The chapter concludes by describing pitfalls to avoid when reporting research findings and revising academic papers as research manuscripts.

Nurses in all clinical settings require the most current and complete evidence of effective approaches to guide their decision making and practice. The evidence should be based on a critical appraisal of studies that answer a specific clinical question or examine best practices and the synthesis of findings from across these studies. In EBP, nurses rely on the synthesis of evidence from multiple studies rather than the report of one original research study. Methods are available to nurse authors for reviewing and integrating individual studies and summarizing the evidence from them to answer a clinical question or explore a topic of interest. These review methods include integrative reviews, systematic reviews, meta-analyses, qualitative syntheses, and others. Chapter 6 describes these methods and presents guidelines for developing manuscripts on different types of reviews. This chapter includes an explanation and examples of the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA), which are the recommended guidelines for reporting these reviews; PRISMA also can be used for literature reviews, as discussed in this chapter. Nurses also write about changes in practice, the effectiveness of new approaches to care, and the process used in a clinical setting to engage in EBP. Chapter 6 presents guidelines for preparing articles related to EBP in nursing.

With the focus on quality and safety in healthcare, it is important for nurse authors to learn about guidelines for reporting quality improvement (QI) studies. Good reporting of QI is critical for readers to understand the problem, context of the study, interventions, and if they made a difference in outcomes. Chapter 7 describes how to write manuscripts that report QI. The Standards for Quality Improvement Reporting Excellence (SQUIRE) are presented as guidelines for preparing these manuscripts.

Chapter 8 presents strategies for writing articles about clinical practice. There are many opportunities for preparing these manuscripts. Nurses can write about their innovations in practice, new initiatives and projects in their clinical setting, updates on clinical topics, and new directions in patient care. Considering the wealth of clinical journals in nursing, these publications provide a venue for nurses to share their work with others. General guidelines for writing clinical articles are presented in the chapter, including writing research reports for clinical journals.

SECTION III: CHAPTERS, BOOKS, AND OTHER FORMS OF WRITING

Although research and clinical practice articles are primary formats for nurses to present knowledge to readers, other forms of writing are equally important. Some articles address emerging issues that affect nursing practice, education, or research. These articles may include case reports; descriptions of theory development; commentaries on policies, ethics, or legal aspects of nursing; innovative research methods; historical studies; editorials; and letters to the editor. Nurses also write book reviews and articles for consumer and non-professional audiences. These other types of writing differ in the purposes they are trying to achieve, their format, and often their writing style. Yet all are similar because they address nontrivial topics, provide original insight, and have implications for advancing health and well-being. Chapter 9 describes these other types of papers and provides many examples to guide these forms of writing.

Writing a book or book chapter is different from writing an article because the author has more opportunity to provide background information and discuss related content, with more pages allowed, than in a manuscript for a journal. Whereas articles generally focus on one topic, books address multiple but related content areas and also require a significant time commitment. Chapter 10 provides information for nurse authors who are interested in writing a book, including contacting a publisher, developing the prospectus, outlining the responsibilities of the author and publisher, detailing the process of writing the book, and working with contributors in an edited book. There also is a section on writing a book chapter.

SECTION IV: THE WRITING PROCESS

At this point in the process of writing, the author has identified the type of manuscript, the purpose of the paper, potential journals, and the audience toward which the paper will be geared. The author has obtained author guidelines from the target journal, has conducted or updated the literature review, has completed other preparations for writing, and is now ready to begin writing the manuscript. Chapter 11 focuses first on preliminary questions to ask before starting to write and on organizing the content into an outline. Next, the chapter describes how to write the first draft of the manuscript. Finally, the chapter describes the steps in revising the content and organization of the paper and then revising the writing structure and style. Some principles are provided for improving how the paper is written.

Most papers written for publication in nursing include references. The references in the manuscript document the literature reviewed by the author who prepared the paper and provide support for the ideas in it. In Chapter 12, the focus is on citing the references in the manuscript and preparing the reference list. Journals use different reference formats, and the author must prepare the references according to the journal guidelines. Examples are provided of how to cite references in the text and in the reference list using different reference styles.

Tables are essential when the author needs to report detailed information and numeric values. It is often clearer and more efficient to develop a table than to present the information in the text. Figures are valuable for demonstrating trends and patterns, and for some manuscripts the author may include an illustration of a new procedure or a photograph of a patient. Not every manuscript, though, needs tables and figures, and whether to include them is a decision made during the drafting phase of writing the paper. Chapter 13 provides guidelines for deciding when to prepare tables and figures and how to develop them. Examples are included of different types of tables, presenting information in a table or as text, and developing figures for a manuscript.

SECTION V: FINAL PAPER THROUGH PUBLICATION

When the author has completed the revisions of the content and format of the paper and prepared the references, tables, and figures, the author is ready to submit the paper to the journal. Prior to submission, the author has some final responsibilities to ensure that the manuscript is consistent with the journal requirements and contains all the required parts for submission. The manuscript is then ready to submit to the journal for review. Chapter 14 describes the steps in preparing all elements of the final paper to submit to the journal and details associated with this submission. Examples of these elements are

provided in the chapter, and a checklist is included for authors to ensure that all items are submitted with the manuscript to avoid delays in its review.

Chapter 15 presents the editorial review process from the point at which the paper is received in the journal office through the final editorial decision. The roles and responsibilities of the editor, editorial board, and peer reviewers are discussed, and examples are provided of criteria used by reviewers when asked to critique a manuscript for publication. Manuscripts submitted to a journal may be accepted without revision or accepted provisionally pending revision, may be returned to the author for a major revision and resubmission, or may be rejected. Each of these editorial decisions has implications for the author and how the author responds to the editor: These are presented in the chapter. Resources for readers include a sample peer-review form and sample letters, which document changes made in the manuscript in response to the reviewers' comments, to submit with the revised manuscript.

When the manuscript is accepted for publication, the paper moves into the publishing phase. The author has some responsibilities here, such as answering queries and correcting page proofs, but most of the work is done by the publisher of the journal or by the group or individual responsible for the publication. Chapter 16 describes the publishing process that begins with the acceptance of the paper through its publication. Publishers have different ways of handling the manuscript editing phase and forms of the manuscript that they return to the author for proofing. The publishing process is described in the chapter, but the author should recognize that it may differ across journals. Copyright also is presented in the chapter.

The scholarly publishing landscape has changed significantly over the last decade. All nurses and other health professionals need to keep abreast of changes in scholarly communication and select the best models for disseminating the results of their research and practice changes. Chapter 17 examines open-access publishing and varied models for this. The chapter also discusses predatory publishing and why nurse authors need to be aware of this issue. Strategies for avoiding the submission of a manuscript to a predatory journal are included in the chapter.

Many individuals have contributed to the preparation and writing of this book. The authors extend a special acknowledgment to Margaret Zuccarini, who recognized the need for this book in nursing. In addition to the book, as a resource for faculty, we have provided an *Instructor's Manual* that includes: a sample syllabus for a course in writing for publication in nursing; an online course with 17 modules (each module has a chapter summary, student learning activities, discussion questions, and online resources); and chapter-based PowerPoint presentations. **To obtain an electronic copy of these materials, faculty should contact Springer Publishing Company at textbook@springerpub.com.**

Marilyn H. Oermann
Judith C. Hays

PREPARING TO WRITE

GETTING STARTED

Writing for publication in nursing is essential to disseminate evidence, share initiatives and innovations with others, provide new information to keep nurses up to date, communicate the findings of research studies, and develop the science base of the profession. Writing manuscripts is hard work, but the process can be simplified by understanding how to develop a manuscript and submit it for publication.

This chapter introduces the steps the author follows in planning, writing, and publishing manuscripts in nursing. The focus of Chapter 1 is on early writing decisions, such as generating ideas, selecting a topic, and deciding on the type of article to be written. These are important decisions because they guide the author in selecting potential journals, which is addressed in Chapter 2.

REASONS TO WRITE

Writing for publication is an important skill for nurses to develop. By communicating initiatives and innovations in clinical practice, findings of research studies and evidence-based practice (EBP) projects, and new ideas, nurses direct the future of their practice and advance the development of the profession. As nursing attempts to build its evidence base, it is increasingly important for nurses to write about studies they are doing in their clinical practice: The findings of these studies provide the evidence for practice. Writing for publication cannot be considered the responsibility of only nurses in academic settings, for clinicians also have a major responsibility to describe the effectiveness of their nursing interventions and the innovations they have developed for patient care. Nurse educators, administrators, managers, and researchers have a similar responsibility: to share knowledge and ideas for the benefit of others.

There are five main reasons to write for publication: (a) to share ideas and expertise with other nurses; (b) to disseminate evidence and the findings of nursing research studies; (c) for promotion, tenure, and other personnel decisions; (d) for development of one's own knowledge and skills; and (e) for personal satisfaction.

Share Ideas and Expertise

Writing for publication provides a way of sharing ideas with other nurses. Through publications, nurses can describe best practices; innovations developed for patients, staff, and students; and new techniques they are using in clinical practice, teaching, management, and administration. Publications keep nurses abreast of new developments in nursing. Writing for publication also provides a forum for nurse leaders and staff nurses to share advances in clinical practice, leadership, teaching, and research (Derouin et al., 2015; Kooker, Latimer, & Mark, 2015; Tyndall, Scott, & Caswell, 2017).

Disseminate Evidence and Research Findings

For nurses involved in research studies and EBP projects, writing for publication is critical. Disseminating research findings and the outcomes of projects to evaluate the effectiveness of nursing interventions is essential to build the knowledge base of nursing, provide new evidence for practice, and develop studies that build on one another. Many clinicians are currently engaged in EBP projects. Some of these projects are to review and synthesize the available evidence to decide on best practices or if a change in practice is warranted. In other settings, nurses are studying the effects of nursing interventions, contributing to the evidence base of nursing. However, those contributions are not realized unless nurses disseminate the findings of their studies and projects. Dissemination needs to be wider than the nurse's own clinical agency, for example, presenting at conferences and publishing in professional journals. By publishing in journals, nurses can share their evidence and research findings with readers worldwide (Oermann, 2012).

Professions have theories to guide their practice, a body of specialized knowledge and competencies, a code of ethics and values, and a role in society. In practice disciplines such as nursing, an added responsibility is the use of research findings and other evidence to guide decisions about patient care. Research findings can only be applied to practice if they are published and made available for use by other clinicians and nursing professionals. All too often, nurses conduct important research without disseminating the findings of these studies to others.

Meet Promotion, Tenure, and Other Job Requirements

For nursing faculty in colleges and universities, writing for publication is required for promotion, tenure, and other personnel decisions. Not all articles carry the same weight in these decisions. Typically, databased papers, which report the findings of a research study, published in peer-reviewed journals are highly valued and more important in tenure and promotion decisions than other types of publications such as non-databased articles, chapters, and books.

Peer-reviewed journals, also called *refereed journals*, use peer reviewers to critique a manuscript as a basis for the acceptance decision. Peer reviewers are experts, external to the journal staff, who provide an independent, critical

assessment of the quality of the manuscript, including the scientific process (International Committee of Medical Journal Editors, 2016). Although the responsibilities of peer reviewers differ with each journal, in general, they critique the manuscript, identify areas for revision, and give expert opinions on the quality of the paper. With some journals, the peer reviewers also suggest to the editor if the manuscript should be accepted, revised and resubmitted, or rejected. The peer-review process is discussed in Chapter 15 of this book. Publishing an article in a peer-reviewed journal is important in tenure and promotion decisions because it indicates that the quality of the paper was assessed by experts based on standards. Most nursing and healthcare journals are peer reviewed, although the process and standards vary for their reviews of papers.

The importance given to writing chapters and books varies across institutions. Most chapters are not peer reviewed and thus do not carry the same weight in tenure and promotion decisions as does an article in a peer-reviewed journal. Completion of a book requires a significant amount of time; prior to the tenure decision, that time might be better spent writing papers for journals. Because the standards for tenure and promotion vary widely across schools of nursing, faculty should be well informed about this process in their own institutions.

While nurses in clinical settings are not faced with tenure and promotion decisions, writing for publication is often a requirement for job mobility in that setting and career advancement. Whether or not the article is databased or published in a peer-reviewed journal is less important than writing for journals read by nurses who need this new information and perspective to guide their practice.

Expand Personal Knowledge and Skills

Another reason to write for publication is the learning gained in the process of preparing the manuscript. Rarely is the nurse able to write a manuscript without completing a thorough review of the literature. This literature review and the thinking that is done in developing the manuscript contribute to the knowledge base and understanding of the author.

Writing skills are useful in many settings as nurses fulfill both professional and personal roles. Writing about a topic facilitates understanding the subject. A good writer—that is, a well-practiced writer—brings a valuable skill to endeavors that range far beyond writing for publication.

Gain Personal Satisfaction

Writing also gives the nurse a sense of personal satisfaction in sharing expertise with other nurses and contributing to the development of the profession. Most journals do not pay authors for their manuscripts; however, writing for publication is personally fulfilling. It is a way of sharing stories and experiences in patient care, teaching, leadership, and other areas.