Reference List Hotspots

Views on citing URLs are in flux. Stay tuned.

“Personal Communication” is a valid citation (though a weak authority because the reader cannot recover the source).

There is nearly always some typesetting involved

- Some part of the title is always italic
- Some items are often bold (volume number)
- Some styles use a small-caps font for the authors
Conclusions

The Conclusions section should not simply be a repeat of prior material in the paper.

If its there, it should provide conclusions.

If there is nothing new to say, leave this section out.

This section often includes suggestions for future work (and might be titled “Conclusions and Future Work”)
Acknowledgments

If the works was supported by a grant, always say that somewhere. Give a grant number (sponsor’s nomenclature) if there is one.

Acknowledgments can come at the beginning of the work, at the end of the work, or in a footnote in an appropriate place.

Also you will likely want to acknowledge those who helped proof the draft, gave ideas, or otherwise helped.

“I would like to thank...” You are thanking them so there’s no “would like to” about it!
Revising a Paper

“Simply go through what you have written and try to curb the length of sentences, question every passive verb and if possible make it active, prune redundant words, and look for nouns used instead of verbs.”

“Every single word that I publish I write at least six times.”

Typical process I follow:
  • Get it all typed in (at terminal)
  • Major reorganization into rough form, with initial scan for style/correctness (at terminal)
  • First copy-edit round with significant alteration/modification/reorganization
  • 1-4 more copy-edit rounds
Tips for Revision

A person can look at something “fresh” only so many times.

- Time can help... let it sit a couple days if schedule permits
- Don’t give it to coauthor/advisor/helper prematurely. If you do, they will merely tell you what you would have discovered yourself on the next proofreading.

For research paper writeups, the writing should not all wait until the end!
Checklist

Delete any word, phrase, sentence whose loss does not change the force or meaning

Replace unnecessary long words with shorter (utilize → use)

Refactor sentences and paragraphs to put similar parts together

Look for ambiguous phrases, unnecessary repetition, passive voice

Are all claims supported?

Check the math, then do it again.

Is the notation as simple as possible?

Did you cite enough? Too much?
When do You Publish a Paper?

There are some tradeoffs.

- More papers is better to a bean counter (least publishable unit)
- More content per paper is better for readers and society
- A paper can only be so long
- A paper has to be “ready” and “enough”

Paper lifecycle

- Possible interim (internal) reports, meetings minutes, emails
- Technical report
- Conference paper (possibly more than one)
- Journal paper