



# **Writing for Social Scientists: How to Start and Finish Your Thesis, Book, or Article: Second Edition (Chicago Guides to Writing, Editing, and Publishing)**

*Howard S. Becker*

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Students and researchers all write under pressure, and those pressures—most lamentably, the desire to impress your audience rather than to communicate with them—often lead to pretentious prose, academic posturing, and, not infrequently, writer’s block.

Sociologist Howard S. Becker has written *the* classic book on how to conquer these pressures and simply write. First published nearly twenty years ago, *Writing for Social Scientists* has become a lifesaver for writers in all fields, from beginning students to published authors. Becker’s message is clear: in order to learn how to write, take a deep breath and then begin writing. Revise. Repeat.

It is not always an easy process, as Becker wryly relates. Decades of teaching, researching, and writing have given him plenty of material, and Becker neatly exposes the foibles of academia and its “publish or perish” atmosphere. Wordiness, the passive voice, inserting a “the way in which” when a simple “how” will do—all these mechanisms are a part of the social structure of academic writing. By shrugging off such impediments—or at the very least, putting them aside for a few hours—we can reform our work habits and start writing lucidly without worrying about grades, peer approval, or the “literature.”

In this new edition, Becker takes account of major changes in the computer tools available to writers today, and also substantially expands his analysis of how academic institutions create problems for them. As competition in academia grows increasingly heated, *Writing for Social Scientists* will provide solace to a new generation of frazzled, would-be writers.

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