

Medical Writing Humour

Cover letters and “Arctic monkeys”

We ended our recent *Intensive Medical Writing Course* at Copenhagen University with a session on cover letters.

Writing cover letters can be a hassle, and the result is often uninspiring. During the course, we do our best to provide practical tips, concrete examples, and – not least – inspiration. We show the students a sample cover letter to give them an idea of appropriate length, style, and structure, and we also present a list of useful vocabulary, standard phrases, and inspirational extras.

After providing tips and examples, we ask the class to complete the following:

“We believe our work would be of particular interest to the readers of *The International Journal of Convincing Research* because...”

First, our students write individually. Then they split into small groups, where they read out their texts. Finally, one text from each group is chosen and is read out to the whole class.

There were many excellent suggestions, but we were all agreed that Tin’s good humoured “Arctic monkeys” text beat the others into the ground. Tin successfully incorporated many of the ideas and phrases we had previously introduced:

- We are pleased to submit this manuscript to be considered for publication in ...
- We used state-of-the-art techniques ...
- This work dramatically alters our current concepts of ...
- As far as we are aware, this is the first study ...
- Unexpectedly ...
- However, we do not consider these to be “negative” data ...
- This manuscript is original work, has not been published before, and is not being considered for publication elsewhere either in printed or electronic form.

Experimental Unit
Institute of Convincing Science
January 23, 2020

Dear Dr Editorian,

We are pleased to submit this manuscript titled “Aerial Primate Experiment: APE” to be considered for publication in your journal.

We believe our work would be of particular interest to the readers of *The International Journal of Convincing Research* because we used state-of-the-art surgical techniques to transplant wings onto monkeys, finally allowing primates to soar freely through the skies. This work dramatically alters our current concepts of their preferred breeding and hunting grounds. Surprisingly, 12 monkeys migrated to the North Pole, turning the cold lands into their new habitat. This band of monkeys was later labelled the “Arctic monkeys”.

As far as we are aware, this is the first study about the migratory behaviour of aerial primates. The fact that monkeys choose to traverse oceans when given the opportunity contrasts with previously published data on their migratory behaviour.

Unexpectedly, none of our study subjects managed to leave Earth’s gravitational field and fly off into space. However, we do not consider these to be “negative” data, and we can conclude that the sky is indeed the limit.

This manuscript is original work, has not been published before, and is not being considered for publication elsewhere either in printed or electronic form. Thank you for considering our paper for publication.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards,

Tin-Quoc Nguyen

SECTION EDITOR



Phil Leventhal

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- Thank you for considering our paper for publication.
- We look forward to hearing from you.

After Tin read out his text, the students went off in high spirits, eager to get back to writing (and revising) their articles and cover letters!

Suggested reading

Møller C. New medical writing course in Copenhagen: Increasing chances of publication for non-native speakers. *The Write Stuff*. 2007;16(1):8–9.

Langdon-Neuner E. About cover letters for manuscripts submitted to biomedical journals. *The Write Stuff*. 2010;19(3):184–7.

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