

## 5 Steps to writing your title

The title is the “label” for your manuscript. It is the last thing you write and is the most important line of the whole article. It must capture readers’ attention and condense the key finding of the paper in one short, clear phrase – typically 10 – 12 words long.



It has been found that (as illustrated perfectly here) ...  
“Articles with short titles describing the results are cited more often”  
<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3351256/>

Alongside the need to be concise, it is also important to achieve search engine hits, generate interest and encourage (the right people) to read further. It is important to include key words in the title (probably two key words), and describe precisely what the article is about. So, a balance needs to be struck between being brief and punchy, and also being descriptive, preferably including key words.

### A good research paper title:

- is descriptive and includes the key point\*
- is brief, uncomplicated and attractive
- includes appropriate key words (ideally 2 or 3)
- avoids abbreviations, acronyms and jargon
- avoids superfluous words, e.g. “A study to determine ...”
- doesn’t try to be funny!

\* this can be the aim of the investigation or the key finding – look at the target journal to see which tends to be the convention (and check out the titles of the most cited articles)

A good title is **descriptive, concise** and **eye-catching** to those to whom it is **relevant**



<http://www.editage.com/insights/3-basic-tips-on-writing-a-good-research-paper-title>



Look at these four published titles and the “keywords” given by the author

|    | TITLE   | Keywords  |
|----|---|---|
| 1. | <b>An evaluation of the adhesion of solid oral dosage form coatings to the oesophagus</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Oesophageal adhesion;</li><li>• Easy-to-swallow;</li><li>• Mucoadhesion;</li><li>• Non-adhesive coatings</li></ul>                              |
| 2. | <b>Hot-melt extrusion of polyvinyl alcohol for oral immediate release applications</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Oral drug delivery;</li><li>• Hot-melt extrusion;</li><li>• Polyvinyl alcohol;</li><li>• Immediate release;</li><li>• Supersaturation</li></ul> |
| 3. | <b>Extrinsic lactose fines improve dry powder inhaler formulation performance of a cohesive batch of budesonide via agglomerate formation and consequential co-deposition</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lactose;</li><li>• Dry powder inhaler;</li><li>• Raman spectroscopy</li></ul>   |
| 4. | <b>Thermally switchable polymers achieve controlled <i>Escherichia coli</i> detachment</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• switchable polymers;</li><li>• thermal responsiveness;</li><li>• ToF-SIMS;</li><li>• <i>Escherichia coli</i></li></ul>                          |

Answer the following questions about the above titles:

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Title 1.</b><br>a) Highlight unnecessary words that add nothing to enhance readability, understanding or engagement<br>b) Compare the keywords with the words used in the title? Consider the impact of this. |  |
| <b>Title 2.</b><br>a) How many words in this title?<br>b) How many keywords have been used in the title?   |  |
| <b>Title 3.</b><br>a) How many words in this title?<br>b) How easy to read and understand is it?<br>c) Try improving and reducing the number of words by at least 4 (even though you don't have the abstract)    |  |
| <b>Title 4.</b><br>a) How many keywords have been used in the title?<br>b) How easy to read and understand is this title?  |  |
| <b>Which title do you think is the most effective? Why?</b>  |  |



## 5 steps to develop your project title

|               |  |  |
|---------------|--|--|
| <b>STEP 1</b> | <b>Summarise the main theme</b> and main result of your project in 2 or 3 sentences  |  |
| <b>STEP 2</b> | a) <b>Write 4 key words</b> , relevant to your project, that would attract readers in the same field, to your article<br><br>b) <b>Highlight</b> the 2 key words that you consider most important  |  |
| <b>STEP 3</b> | <b>Bring STEPS 1 and 2</b> together into one long phrase that captures the work and includes 2 key words (ideally the highlighted 2 words from STEP 2)   |  |
| <b>STEP 4</b> | <b>Refine the STEP 3 sentence</b> to make it more attractive, more readable and shorter (ideally 10–12 words, maximum 15).<br><br>Eliminate superfluous words and re-order if necessary.   |  |
| <b>STEP 5</b> | <b>Check/edit the title once more:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Does it clearly describe the key “point” of the article?</li><li>- Does it make sense ... is it in plain English (ask a friend to read it)?</li><li>- Does it avoid abbreviations, acronyms and jargon?</li></ul> |  |