

# **ASSAf Workshop on Scientific Writing**

## **USE OF ENGLISH**

**Practical exercises drawn from  
Robert A Day: How to Write a  
Scientific Paper, 2 nd Ed.1983  
ISI Press, Phil, PA, USA**



# Jargon, etc

**Jargonists usually avoid one-syllable words: They:**

- don't use, they utilise
- don't do, they perform
- don't start, they commence
- don't make, they fabricate
- don't end, they terminate
- don't say drug, say chemotherapeutic agent
- say 'at this point in time'.....etc

# Definition of 'Jargon'

- (i) Confused, unintelligible language; strange, outlandish or barbarous language
- (ii) technical terminology or characteristic idiom of a special activity or group
- (iii) obscure, often pretentious language marked by circumlocutions and long words.

**AVOID ALL THREE (ii) MOST DIFFICULT**

# Examples of Jargon I

- **“As a case in point, other authorities have proposed that slumbering dogs should best be left in a recumbent position”**
- **“It has been posited that a high degree of curiosity proved lethal to a feline”**
- **“Much experimental evidence suggests that smaller members of the genus Mus tend to engage in recreational activity while the feline is remote from the locale”**

## Examples of Jargon II

- **“A sedimentary conglomerate in motion down a declivity gains no addition of mossy material”**
- **“The resultant experimental data indicate that there is no utility in belabouring a deceased equine”**

**Exercise: Try to concoct a ‘long version’ of any other pithy proverb you know**

# Words and expressions to avoid I

- A considerable amount of (=much)
- A majority of (=most)
- A large number of (=many)
- Accounted for by the fact (=because)
- Along the lines of (=like)
- An order of magnitude faster (=ten times faster)
- At an earlier date (=previously)
- At the present time (=now)
- Definitely proved (=proved)

# Words and expressions to avoid II

- **Due to the fact that (=because)**
- **Elucidate (=explain)**
- **Having regard to (= about)**
- **In view of the fact that (=since)**
- **It has been reported by Smith (=Smith reported)**
- **It is apparent that (=apparently)**
- **Red in colour (=red)**
- **subsequent to (=after)**
- **Take into consideration (=consider)**
- **Was of the opinion of (=believed)**