

## Guidance for authors of BTS Public Statements

As part of its Public Communications Strategy, the British Toxicology Society (BTS) commissions short articles which will be published on the BTS website as Public Statements.

Although the intended primary audience is the general public, we can also expect the articles to be read by BTS members, other scientists and journalists.

Authors are invited to write an article because of their expertise on the topic. However, since the articles are published as BTS Public Statements, without author attribution, they are reviewed by members of the Public Communications Steering Team who may offer comments on length, organisation, or clarity of presentation (particularly for an inexperienced reader). The Steering Team may also ask for review by a lay (non-specialist) reader and/or approval by the BTS Executive Committee before publication on the BTS website.

The articles should be educational and as objective, balanced and scientifically accurate as possible, avoiding jargon and unexplained acronyms. Authors are encouraged to include appropriate illustrations such as diagrams, figures, or pictures. The appropriate length of these articles can vary according to the nature and complexity of the topics. In general, they should be no more than 3 A4 pages in length or a maximum count of circa 2000 words in the main text excluding headings, text boxes and illustration legends. There is no expectation that they should be extensively referenced but a few key references (hyperlinked from the text) would be appropriate. Notwithstanding, authors should observe best practice in publication ethics and avoid plagiarism by citing sources. Authors are also advised that, if they are drawing on their own published work, this should be appropriately referenced.

Following publication on the website, the Steering Committee will normally use BTS social media (LinkedIn and Twitter) to publicise the statements to a wider audience.

**The following additional guidance may be helpful to some authors:**

### **Approach**

Before starting to write and when pausing to review the work, consider:

- What am I trying to accomplish?
- Who is my audience?

Making the article a 'story' draws in readers and keeps their interest. Try to explain the issues as you would to friends in a coffee shop or over dinner

### **Structure and Writing Style**

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<b>Structure</b>	
Title	When choosing the title, consider: Is it clear? Is it short? Is it catchy (but still makes it clear what the topic is)? Does it entice the reader in?
Setting the scene	The first sentence and paragraph should outline the topic and the 'story'.
Transitions	How the 'story' unfolds from one section to the next is important. Consider how each paragraph follows from the last.
Sub-headings	Use subheadings to add structure and assist readers in navigating the article.
Visual aids	Good clear pictures or diagrams often help readers to understand tricky concepts and can save many words.
Final paragraph	The final paragraph should finish the story and state the take-home message

## Writing Style

Use the 'active voice'

Use the 'active voice' (e.g. "scientists discovered") instead of the passive voice (e.g. 'it was discovered by scientists'). This makes the text easier to read and is particularly important for online readers, who tend to disengage rapidly.

Managing complex terms

Keeping language simple will help readers to navigate articles on new topics. Placing explanation of key complex term/s or concept/s within a text box can help to separate the explanation from the 'story', maintaining flow.

## Further resources

- Cancer research UK; [Writing for a lay audience](#):
- SOT article; [Is that Science News relevant to me](#)
- [BTS Public statements](#)