Writing Tips

1. You may find it easier to write by creating a detailed outline first. Expand the outline to formulate the first draft of your paper. This will help you to organize your ideas.

2. Be sure to cite each reference used within the text in the reference list. Also, check that you have used each reference appearing in the final list in the text. If you are unsure about how to cite a reference, include all possible information that may be needed. Compiling reference information on index cards or in an electronic reference manager can be useful to keep track of them. It is better to have the information on hand than to go back and track down the information when you are ready to compile your reference list.

3. All references should be in alphabetical order, using the surname of the first author.

4. Once you have written the first draft of your manuscript, put it away for a few days. Review it after you have taken a break from working on it. It will be easier to identify areas that are not stated the way you wanted or are missing.

5. After you have written the second draft and are comfortable with it (or don't know where to go next), select a few people to read your manuscript for a constructive critique. Select someone whom you feel will give you an honest and objective opinion. Be prepared for the reviewer to suggest a lot of changes. If the person suggests no changes, choose another reviewer.

6. Avoid wordiness and redundancy. Saying the same thing in different ways in different sentences and paragraphs will not help to get your point across.

7. Avoid using "we" or "you" collectively to address the reader. Using "I" or "we" is acceptable when referring to yourself as the author(s), but this should be used sparingly.

8. Spell out what a word stands for the first time it is used in the text, and include the abbreviation in parentheses afterward. After that, use the abbreviation on its own. For example: "American Nurses Association (ANA)" in the first reference; "ANA" in subsequent references. Do not use an abbreviation if a term is used only once in the chapter text. Judicious use of abbreviations is recommended to enhance the readability of the text.

9. Use a final serial comma (i.e., place a comma after the next-to-last object, action, etc., in a series; Oxford comma). In addition, a comma should precede and, but, or, nor, for, so, although, yet, and other connectives when they link independent clauses (i.e., clauses that could be written separately).

10. For direct quotations in the text, specify the exact page number for the quote and use "p." if one page of the publication is noted; use "pp." if more than one is noted.

11. In-text citations are included for all statistics, dosages, and references made to the work of or reported by another author. Use primary references whenever possible. These should match the reference list.

12. Use of generic drug names is preferred. If a brand name is required, it should appear in parentheses (with applicable ™ or ®) after the generic name.

13. Indicate the placement of tables and figures with a callout (see Table 3-1) in the text. Do not place the table or figure in the text at that point. Tables and figures should appear separately after the references.

14. For tables and figures with information from references but not directly reprinted, include "Note.

Based on information from [references]." at the bottom of the table/figure.

15. For figures with photographs or graphics, digital images must be high resolution (300 dpi or higher) in TIFF, EPS, or JPEG format. Image files should be included separately, not only placed in the Word file. Captions should reflect the source: "Image courtesy of [person or organization]. Used with permission." Include any specific information required in permission letters.

16. Place all tables and figures at the end of the document after the references. Indicate the number of the table or figure and number them consecutively throughout the chapter. Tables and figures are numbered separately (Figure 1-1; Table 1-1). Please make sure the numbers correspond to the callouts in the text