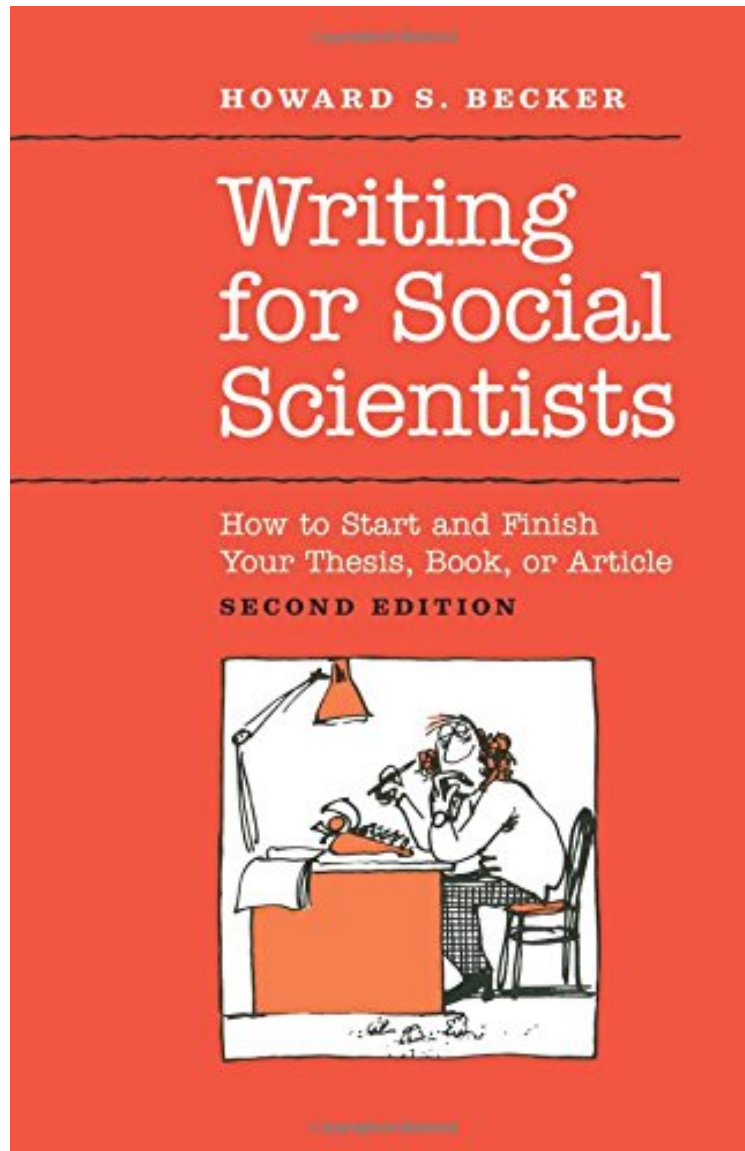


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Writing for Social Scientists: How to Start and Finish Your Thesis, Book, or Article: Second Edition (Chicago Guides to Writing, Editing, and Publishing)

Howard S. Becker

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before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised *Writing for Social Scientists: How to Start and Finish Your Thesis, Book, or Article: Second Edition* (Chicago Guides to Writing, Editing, and Publishing):

18 of 18 people found the following review helpful. Good, but the second edition has few changes
By Hal Jordan
I bought the first edition of this book about 20 years ago and found it very helpful. I long ago misplaced my copy and so was happy to order the new second edition. On reading the book again, I found Becker's advice to be as good as I remembered, but I was disappointed that he had made so few changes in the "second edition." Essentially, the first edition has been reprinted verbatim--even typos weren't corrected--with a relatively few pages of additional material added to the last two chapters. Chapter 9 now contains Becker's general thoughts on recent software that he considers useful to writers. This discussion would have been more helpful if he had been willing to mention specific programs. I guess he decided not to either to avoid giving free advertising or to avoid dating the discussion. The last chapter gives some interesting, if brief, observations on the place of writing in modern academic life. In short, if you already have the first edition, there's not much point in buying the second edition. If, on the other hand, you haven't encountered this book before and you would like some useful tips on academic writing, it's well worth the price.
0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Hits the nail on the head.
By Nick's Mommy
Reading this for one of my classes. Wish I had read it in the first semester of my doc program. Would have saved me some stress and many hours of writer's block. Academic writing can be very intimidating. Becker does a great job making us see that we're not alone in our insecurity quirks about writing. This book and its themes are timeless.
0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Great for Writers!
By Customer
Excellent text to dispel the fears and challenges, internal and external, to becoming a professional writer. Becker is witty and informative and indeed hopeful.

Students and researchers all write under pressure, and those pressures most lamentably, the desire to impress your audience rather than to communicate with them often lead to pretentious prose, academic posturing, and, not infrequently, writers block. Sociologist Howard S. Becker has written the classic book on how to conquer these pressures and simply write. First published nearly twenty years ago, *Writing for Social Scientists* has become a lifesaver for writers in all fields, from beginning students to published authors. Becker's message is clear: in order to learn how to write, take a deep breath and then begin writing. Revise. Repeat. It is not always an easy process, as Becker wryly relates. Decades of teaching, researching, and writing have given him plenty of material, and Becker neatly exposes the foibles of academia and its publish or perish atmosphere. Wordiness, the passive voice, inserting a the way in which when a simple how will do all these mechanisms are a part of the social structure of academic writing. By shrugging off such impediments or at the very least, putting them aside for a few hours we can reform our work habits and start writing lucidly without worrying about grades, peer approval, or the literature. In this new edition, Becker takes account of major changes in the computer tools available to writers today, and also substantially expands his analysis of how academic institutions create problems for them. As competition in academia grows increasingly heated, *Writing for Social Scientists* will provide solace to a new generation of frazzled, would-be writers.

"Humane, wry, reflective, gentle, wise.... A primer in the sense that it teaches the elements of good writing [and] a shrewd and subtle essay on the social organization of scholarship." - Kai Erikson, *Contemporary Sociology* "This little book is must reading for any would-be writer, social scientist or not, who has sat in front of a blank piece of paper...and wondered whether the plants have been watered lately." - Jane Delano Brown, *Journalism Quarterly* "From the Back Cover Both the means and the reasons for writing a thesis or article or book are socially structures by the organization of graduate study, the requirements for publication, and the conditions for promotion, and the pressures arising from these situations create the writing style so often lampooned and lamented. About the Author Howard S. Becker lives and works in San Francisco. He is the author of several books, including *Outsiders*, *Tricks of the Trade*, and *Telling About Society*.