

Evolving Style

17th century writing often was solicitous of the sponsors.

John Graunt (1662)

The Epistle Dedicatory.
TO THE
RIGHT HONOURABLE JOHN Lord ROBERTS,
Baron of Truro, Lord Privie-Seal,
and one of His Majestie's most Honourable Privie Council.

My Lord,

As the favours I have received from your Lordship oblige me to present you with some token of my gratitude: so the especial Honour I have for your Lordship hath made me solicitous in the choice of the Present. For, if I could have given your Lordship any choice Excerptions out of the Greek, or Latine Learning, I should (according to our English Proverb) thereby but carry Coals to Newsastle, and but give your lordship Puddle-water, who, by your own eminent Knowledge in those learned Languages, can drink out of the very Fountains your self.

19th century writing was more breathless with surprize.

I was performing the Kjeldahl test on the mashed plant leaves when I saw to my astonishment that ...”

Today we try to appear completely impartial, as if anyone would have done it the same way.

- No surprises. Work back from conclusion to make a logical trail from the start to the stop, even if you didn't know where you were going to end up when you started.
- Co-authors/committees
- No people involved, use passive voice:

Next, the Kjeldahl test was performed on the mashed plant leaves.

- Never use “I”, invent fake collaborators for first person:

We ran the Kjeldahl procedure on the leaf homogenate.