Writing Short

I came.
I saw.
I conquered.

Veni, vidi, vici.
TECHNICAL PAPER

BACKGROUND

METHODS

FINDINGS

THE POINT!
So, what to do?
Less of everything.

• Focus on fewest number of characters possible.
• Stick to a chronological narrative. (Don’t force reader to work or go back.)
• Compress time: Use “sign posts” as your time jumping machine ("ultimately,"
  "eventually," "in the end," "Then," "Finally.")
Luckily, science stories often lend themselves to streamlined narratives:

*The Quest*

*The Mystery*

*The Voyage of Change*

**Begin at the beginning:** Why did they do the work (set off on the quest or voyage)? What was the question (mystery)?

**The middle:** What did they do? How did they do it? What obstacles did they have to overcome?

**The end:** Eureka! We found it! We have solved the mystery! We are changed! We see the world differently!
Sometime, you get lucky…
The Tale of Two Softball Pitchers

Meet the pitcher
Meet the batter
Chronology: How they end up here
Obstacle, complication
Resolution
HAPPY ENDING

Pitches (backbone)

1 2 3 4 5 6
Sometimes, short can even be fun…

Scientists say they've identified a fish with the shortest life span of any vertebrate. The coral reef pygmy gobi lives, at most, 59 days.