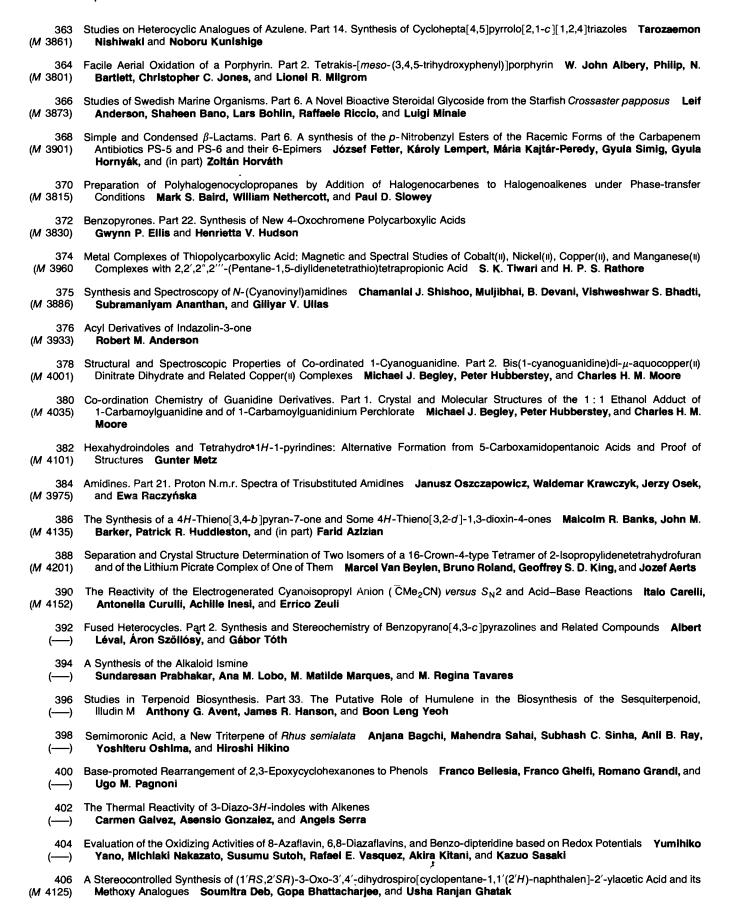
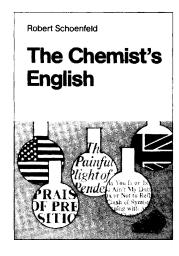
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The Chemist's English

by R. Schoenfeld

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In this book that is fun to read, the author proves that scientific English can be fun to write. It is addressed to the scientist (not necessarily a chemist) who has to publish his results and does not enjoy writing them up. After reading these cheerful and stimulating essays, sitting down at one's writing desk will no longer seem the same hardship.

This is not a teaching book or a "usage" book (there are plenty of those on the market). The author wants to stimulate the reader into solving his problems by himself. It is not assumed that the would-be writer has his troubles because of a lack of education or a lack of alertness — most scientists cannot be faulted in this respect. Rather, the troubles arise because research workers who are at home in a logical and perfectly structured thought system cannot easily adjust to so tricky, convoluted and sometimes illogical a system as the English language. All the pitfalls of scientific English are lovingly and cheerfully explored, and analyzed with the logical tools of the chemist, physicist or biologist. One of the most exciting chapters is called, in fact, "A Chemical Analysis of the English Sentence".

The book can be savored by dipping into it, but it is most enjoyable when read in its proper order. The bread-and-butter issues of scientific writing, such as misuse of participles, are discussed first. Then come such peculiarities as acronyms or jargon, then stylistic matters, and in the end some more searching chapters about the structure of language. In between there are some entertaining digressions, such as a history of the letter z and the tale of the entry of the delightful word moiety into scientific language.

What gives this book its special flavor is the author's boisterous humor. The reader is never lectured at, but always treated as a "mate" and confidant.



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