

INTERMEDIATE LABORATORY - PHYX 3870-3800

A GUIDE TO THE TERMINOLOGY OF SCIENTIFIC PAPERS

In each couplet, the first is the phrase as it appears in the scientific literature; the second is the translation as to what it really means:

It has long been known that...

I haven't bothered to look up the original reference.

Here comes some richly deserved character assassination.

It is believed that...

I think...

While it has not been possible to provide definitive answers to these questions...

The experiment didn't prove anything, but at least I can publish the data somewhere.

It is generally believed that...

A couple of other guys think so, too.

Much additional work will be required.

The paper isn't very good, but neither is anyone else's.

It is not unreasonable to assume...

If you don't believe this, you might as well stop reading here.

Of great theoretical importance...

I got a paper out of it.

A preliminary examination revealed...

One of my grad students pointed this out to me.

Of great practical importance as well...

I got a grant out of it, too.

Four samples were chosen for further study.

The others didn't make sense, so we ignored them.

These investigations proved highly rewarding...

My grant is going to be renewed.

Results from the third sample may be of somewhat lower confidence...

I dropped it on the floor.

Thanks are due to Joe Blow for laboratory assistance and to Jane Doe for many valuable discussions...

Joe did all the work, and Jane explained it to me.

...but are consistent with the data obtained from the other samples.

...but scooped most of it up.

A definite trend is evident...

...These data are practically meaningless.

Handled with extreme care during the entire procedure...

NOT dropped on the floor...

These results will be shown in a subsequent report...

...I might get around to this if I'm pushed.

Typical results are shown.

The best results are shown.

The most reliable results are those obtained by Jones...

...He was my graduate student.

Correct within an order of magnitude...

Wrong

It is clear that additional work will be required before a complete understanding of the phenomenon occurs...

...I don't understand it.

Not inconsistent with other determinations, given our current limited understanding of this field...

Meaningless

It is hoped that this study will stimulate further investigation in this field...

...This is a lousy paper, but so are all the others on this miserable topic.

The significance of these results is unclear.

Look at the pretty artifact.

A careful analysis of the available data...

...Three pages of original notes were obliterated when I knocked over a beer.

It might be argued that...

I have such a devastating rebuttal to this argument that I shall now deliberately raise it.

A statistically oriented projection of the significance of the findings...

...Wild guess.

We are unable to reconcile our results with those of Hackenbush, but...