



American Chemical Society Books Guidelines for Writing Prefaces and Overviews

Preface:

In the preface, the main editor or author speaks directly, but briefly, to the readers, describing his or her intent in writing or editing the book. Your preface should address the following questions or issues:

- What is the book about? What is the scope of the book?
- Why is research in the field important?
- Why is there a need for the information contained in the book?
- Why is research in this field escalating?
- If it is a Symposium Series Title, what motivated the organization of the symposium?
- What makes the book unusual and worth reading?
- Who will be interested in reading this book?
- How will the reader benefit by reading this book?

Discuss the specific topic of the book but do not include a restatement of the table of contents.

The final paragraph may include acknowledgments of personal, professional, and financial assistance.

The entire preface can be as short as four paragraphs, and should not be longer than three type-written pages.

Finally, the preface must end with the name of each editor, his or her affiliation, and complete contact information (address, phone, fax, and e-mail address).

Overview Chapter:

The overview chapter is primarily an overview of the topic, not of the book. Because it is an overview of the topic, the overview chapter provides an opportunity for the editor to discuss aspects of the topic that are not necessarily covered in individual chapters of the book. Future implications in the field are also addressed in the overview chapter. It is appropriate to make references to specific chapters as long as they are topical references.

The overview sets the tone for the book. By making it as interdisciplinary as possible, it also has the potential of broadening the audience. An important portion of the market for your book includes people who are not directly involved in the respective field, but who are interested in and are looking for books to prepare or introduce them its issues and research. The overview chapter should be prepared with these readers in mind so that this potential audience is captured.