

massimo sandal

professional science writer and communicator

what do you do?

I am a professional science writer since 2011, full time since 2016.

I collaborate with national and international magazines and publishers for science stories, from brief news to in-depth narratives. While very flexible, I mostly work on Anthropocene and ecological upheavals, past and present; medicine; sociology and practice of science.

My skill is conveying complex concepts in an accurate but captivating fashion to different audiences and stakeholders. Clarity, nuance, accuracy and engagement are not mutually exclusive, but reinforce each other, bringing together the scientific community and the public.

what is your experience?

FREELANCE SCIENCE WRITER (2011 – Present)

- Author of hundreds of articles, from brief news to in-depth longforms, for national magazines (On the right: cover art based on an article of mine, for the September 2020 Italian issue of Scientific American).
- Author of chapters for high school science textbooks, for the Italian publishers Zanichelli and Mondadori
- Occasional medical writer for Springer Healthcare

FACT CHECKER (2020-2021)

- Winner of a 1-year Facebook Health fellowship within the fact checking organization Facta. Duties included writing fact-checking articles, in-depth longforms, and helping to counter COVID-19 misinformation on social media.

BOOK AUTHOR (2019)

- Author of *The Melancholy of the Mammoth*, a non-fiction book on extinction and de-extinction for the Italian publisher Il Saggiatore. It sold thousands of copies and had a very good critical and reader feedback. A German translation has been published by Hirzel Verlag in October 2023.

PRESS OFFICE (2011 and 2020)

- Writer and curator of press releases for the biotech startups Personal Genomics and Sibylla Biotech.

OTHER RELATED EXPERIENCE

- Editor for the Italian translation of the psychology book *The Scout Mindset*, by Julia Galef (2022)
- Coauthor of two science-themed theater shows in 2020 and 2021
- Guest appearances on Italian national broadcasting radio and TV



good in school?

Ph.D. in Computational Biomedicine (2016)
RWTH Aachen, Germany

Ph.D. in Functional Biology of Cellular and Molecular Systems (2008)
University of Bologna, Italy

M.Sci. Degree in Industrial Biotechnology (2004)
University of Bologna, Italy
110/110 cum laude

do you speak...?

Italian
fluent (native)

English
fluent (C2 level)

German
okay (B1/B2 level)

relevant highlights?

Some selected work:

[I dilemmi delle droghe su misura](#)

Le Scienze, January 2024 (cover)

[Esiste un consenso sul cambiamento climatico?](#)

A Fuoco Newsletter (project on climate change by Facta.news, Slow News e Pagella Politica), November 15, 2023

[How smart were dinosaurs? New studies fuel the debate](#)

Scientific American, July 6, 2023 (translated from [the Italian](#))

[Come sta la comunicazione della scienza in Italia?](#)

Il Tascabile (Treccani), May 5, 2022

[Negare le crisi](#)

Il Tascabile, October 8, 2020

[La malinconia del mammut. Specie estinte e come riportarle in vita.](#)

Il Saggiatore, November 2019

Feltrinelli reprint, March 2022

[Hirzel Verlag](#) (German edition), October 2023

A book on the science, culture, history and lore of biological extinction, with an emphasis on the current biological crisis.

[L'accesso al sapere scientifico](#)

Le Scienze, December 10, 2016

[Perché non crediamo alla scienza.](#)

Wired Italia, March 10, 2015.

international guest

In 2024 was among the selected writers representing Italy, country guest of honour at the **2024 Frankfurt book fair**

In 2023 I had been [invited as a speaker](#) in Melbourne (Australia) by the Italian Institute of Culture for the **Tools for After** literary festival.



who did you write for?

Italian:

Il Post

Wired

Le Scienze

Il Tascabile (Treccani)

Radar

Repubblica

Motherboard

Esquire

Univadis

Zanichelli – Aula di Scienze

International:

Scientific American

Teknoscienze

Medscape

and beyond communication?

POST-DOCTORAL STRUCTURAL BIOLOGY RESEARCHER

University of Verona, Italy (2012 – 2013)

- Bioinformatic studies on structure and function of proteins (mostly GPCRs) and coding of web tools for protein modeling

University of Cambridge, UK (2009 – 2011)

- FEBS Post-doctoral fellowship: Bioinformatic and experimental studies on aggregation and misfolding of proteins involved in Parkinson's disease

University of Bologna, Italy (2008-2009)

- Experimental single-molecule studies of protein misfolding by AFM and development of data analysis software

As a scientist, I published 13 academic papers, cited a total of 1611 times, with an h-index of 11 ([according to Google Scholar](#), February 28, 2024).

I have been an editor for [a volume](#) of the series *International Review of Cell and Molecular Biology* (Elsevier, 2017)

TEXT MINING SOLUTION DEVELOPER

Linguamatics Ltd., Cambridge, UK (2011)

Development of text mining resources (ontologies and helping scripts) for a biomedical textmining software.

what about computers?

Social media

Facebook, Instagram, X/Twitter, LinkedIn, Whatsapp, Telegram, Threads

Programming

Python. Some work in PHP, Perl, MATLAB, Basic.

Office and Graphics

MS Office, LibreOffice, LaTeX, Inkscape, GIMP, Photoshop, some Illustrator

Operating systems

Linux, Microsoft Windows, OS X

Markup languages

basics of HTML/CSS

CMS

MediaWiki, Wordpress

Version control systems

some experience with Git and Subversion