

Publishing a Journal Article: An Overview of the Process

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Overview

- Deciding what (or when) to publish
- Identifying a target journal
- Following the journal's instructions
- Submitting the paper
- Understanding the decision process
- Revising a paper
- Answering queries
- Reviewing proofs

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Deciding What (or When) to Publish

- Some factors to consider: quality of the work, extent of the work, interest to others
- Suggestions:
 - Seek guidance in this regard from others in your field who are more experienced in publishing journal articles.
 - Present your work orally first. Doing so can help in gauging whether the work is publishable and in shaping the paper.

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Identifying a Target Journal

- In general:
 - Decide early (before drafting the paper).
 - Do not write the paper and then look for a journal.
- Look for journals that have published work similar to yours.
- Consider journals that have published work you cite.

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Some Factors to Consider

- Audience
- Prestige
- Access
- Impact
- Publication time
- Quality of reproduction
- Likelihood of acceptance

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Journals' Instructions to Authors

- Usual locations: in the journal and on the journal's Web site
- A collection of instructions from biomedical journals: <http://mulford.meduohio.edu/instr/>
- Other examples of instructions to authors:
 - [Science](#)
 - [Journal of the American Chemical Society](#)
 - [IEEE publications](#)

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Using the Journal's Instructions

- Read the instructions to authors before starting to prepare your paper.
- Consult the instructions while preparing your paper.
- Check the instructions again before submitting your paper.

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Some Questions the Instructions May Answer

- What categories of article does the journal publish?
- What is the maximum length of articles?
- What is the maximum length of abstracts?
- Does the journal have a template for articles? If so, how can it be accessed?
- What sections should the article include? What are the guidelines for each?

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Some Questions (cont)

- What guidelines should be followed regarding writing style?
- How many figures and tables are allowed? What are the requirements for them?
- In what format should references appear? Is there a maximum number of references?
- In what electronic format should the paper be prepared?

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Beyond the Instructions

- Look at some recent issues of the journal. Doing so can help you gear your paper to the journal.

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Submitting the Paper

- Traditional submission (by mail)
- Electronic submission
- Inclusion of a cover letter (conventional or electronic)
- Completion of required forms

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Some Categories of Editors at Journals

- Helpful to know because you might interact with each
- Main categories:
 - Editor-in-chief (scientific editor)
 - Managing editor
 - Manuscript editor

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Initial Screening by the Journal

- For appropriateness of subject matter
- For compliance with instructions
- For overall quality (sometimes)

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Peer Review

- Evaluation by experts in the field
- Purposes:
 - To help the editor decide whether to publish the paper
 - To help the authors improve the paper, whether or not the journal accepts it

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The Editor's Decision

- Based on the peer reviewers' advice, the editor's own evaluation, the amount of space in the journal, other factors
- Options:
 - Accept as is (rare)
 - Accept if suitably revised
 - Reconsider if revised
 - Reject

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Revising a Paper

- Revise and resubmit promptly.
- Include a letter saying what revisions were made. If you received a list of requested revisions, address each in the letter.
- If you disagree with a requested revision, explain why in your letter. Try to find a different way to solve the problem the editor or reviewer identified.

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Answering Queries

- Queries: questions from the manuscript editor
- Some topics of queries:
 - Inconsistencies
 - Missing information
 - Ambiguities
 - Other
- Advice: Respond promptly, politely, and completely yet concisely.

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Reviewing Proofs

- Proof: copy of typeset material to check
- Some things to check:
 - Completeness (presence of all components)
 - Absence of typographical errors in text and references
 - Placement of figures and tables
 - Quality of reproduction of figures
- Note: This is not the time to rewrite the paper.

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A Final Step:
Celebrate Publication of Your Paper!



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