

## **How to Write a Journal Article**

### **1. Identify your Audience and Type of Publication**

- Is your audience local, regional, national or international?
- Who is your audience (e.g. teachers, researchers, general public)?
- Is your paper suitable as a magazine article? Book? Research note? Literature review? Or a journal article?
- If it is an article for a journal, do you:
  - Write an article for a specific journal?
  - Find a journal for your article?

### **2. Choosing the Correct Journal**

- Research the journals in your field:
- Library, publishers' websites, e.g. <http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals>
- Talk to peers
- Identify the type of journal most appropriate for your article (general, niche?)
- Familiarize yourself with the aims and scope of the journals in your field

### **3. Assessing the Best Journal for Your Article**

- Is it international?
- Is it peer reviewed, and how long will this take?
- Who is the editor?
- Who is on the editorial board?
- Who publishes in the journal?
- Is it in the Social Science Citation Index (SSCI®) database?
- Is the journal available online and/or in printed form?
- Is it published by a major international publisher or association/learned society?
- Does the journal currently have a "Call for Papers" out for a specific topic you are interested in writing about?

### **4. Writing for Your Chosen Journal**

- Look at previous papers to get a feel for what is accepted
- Check the aims and scope statement again
- Take note of the maximum extent (word count) of the submission
- Follow any submission guidelines carefully
- Quote from previous papers (show awareness of the literature)
- Send an abstract to the editor

### **5. Preparing the Journal Manuscript**

- Read the "notes for contributors" or "instructions for authors" carefully
- Ensure the article is correctly formatted and referenced.
- Utilize automated reference and/or article-formatting tools (e.g. EndNote®, Reference Manager®, ProCite®, Bibloscape, POPYRUS®).
- It is always best to check the journal's preferred stylebook for reference formatting, and to format your references accordingly.

- It is recommended manuscripts submitted for review be double-spaced, and set in a font for easy reading.
- Most journals also prefer a covering page with the papers title, authors, and author affiliations.
- Write an abstract
- Assure that if the journal requires a specific set of headings (e.g. “Materials and Methods”, “Conclusions”) that your paper is authored to follow this style. If there are no specific guidelines for headings, it is still recommended you use headings to separate major ideas in your article.
- Ensure references cited in the text appear in the bibliography. In-text citations not referenced in this way will otherwise need to be added during production.
- Expand any acronyms. Remember your audience is international.
- Check spelling and grammar. Pay special attention to whether the journal you are writing for specifically requests “American” or “English” spelling.
- Figures, tables and photographs.
  - Check they are ALL present, and are referred to in the text of your paper.
  - If images are embedded in the text, you also need to include high resolution (300dpi or better) versions as separate files.
  - Consider how figures and tables will appear in the journal. Make sure that enlargement or reduction of any photos will be possible without loss of meaning. Additionally, bear in mind that tables with too many columns or rows may be hard to read in print.
  - Ensure you have the correct copyright clearance for any material in your paper that is already © to a third party, e.g. pictures.
- Ask a colleague to read your paper prior to submission.
- Is there an online article submission facility (e.g. Manuscript Central™ or a dedicated journal email box) or does the journal require hard-copy submission?

## 6. Reasons for rejection/ways to avoid rejection

Professor David Phillips (University of Oxford), Editor of the *Oxford Review of Education*, has offered the following ten explanations of why articles are rejected:

- The article not ready, only a draft
- The article is too parochial (will not appeal to a wider, international audience)
- Poor English (if English is not your first language, seek help)
- Manuscript is poorly prepared (see 5 above)
- Too short or too long (check the article length specified in author guidelines)
- Article is submitted to the wrong journal (material not of relevance to readership – check the aims and scope of a journal before submitting to it)
- Nothing new is stated or found
- Under-theorized
- Under-contextualized
- Not properly a journal article (e.g. better suited to another form of publication)