How to Get Published in a Research Journal

Author Rights & Responsibilities

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1. How to Get Published: Objectives

- What steps do I need to take before I write my paper?

- How can I ensure I am using proper manuscript language?

- How do I build up my article properly?
2. Author Responsibilities & Rights

- Author Responsibilities – publication ethics
- Author Rights – using your article
What steps do I need to take before I write my paper?
Determine if you are ready to publish

You should consider publishing if you have information that advances understanding in a specific research field.

This could be in the form of:

- Presenting new, original results or methods
- Rationalizing, refining, or reinterpreting published results
- Reviewing or summarizing a particular subject or field

If you are ready to publish, a strong manuscript is what is needed next.
Do not consider publishing if:

• The research is out of date

• You would be duplicating previously published work

• Your conclusions are not clearly justified by the results
What is a strong manuscript?

- Has a clear, useful, and exciting message
- Presented and constructed in a logical manner
- Reviewers and editors can grasp the significance easily

Editors and reviewers are all busy people – make things easy to save their time

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Decide the most appropriate type of manuscript

- Conference Papers
- Full articles/Original articles
- Short communications/letters
- Review papers/perspectives

- Self-evaluate your work: Is it sufficient for a full article?
- Ask your supervisor and colleagues for advice on manuscript type. Sometimes outsiders see things more clearly than you.
Conference Papers

• Excellent for disseminating early or in-progress research findings
• Typically 5-10 pages, 3 figures, 15 references
• Submit the paper to conference organisers
• Good way to start a scientific research career

Sample Conference Paper titles:

• “Relationship between handedness and thinking styles in male and female students”
• “Preschool Children’s Understanding of Biased Social Cognition”
Full articles/Original article

- Standard for disseminating completed research findings
- Typically 10-20 pages, 5 figures, 25 references
- Draft and submit the paper to a carefully chosen journal
- Good way to build a scientific research career

Sample full article titles:
- “When do memory limitations lead to regularization? An experimental and computational approach?”
- “Dream recall frequency: Impact of prospective measures and motivational factors”
- “Internet use and psychological well-being among college students: A latent profile approach”
Short Communications Articles

• Quick and early communications of significant, original advances.
• Much shorter than full articles.

Sample Short Communications titles:

• Female smokers show lower pain tolerance in a physical distress task”
• “Clothing choices, weight, and trait self-objectification”
• “Selective imitation in 6-month-olds: The role of the social and physical context”
Review papers/perspectives

- Critical synthesis of a specific research topic
- Typically 20+ pages, 5+ figures, 80 references
- Often solicited by journal editors
- Good way to consolidate a scientific research career

Sample review article titles:

- “Recent advances in research on school-based extracurricular activities and adolescent development”
- “Legal and psychological perspectives on children’s competence to testify in court”
Citations impact trends varies by article type

![Graph showing citations impact trends for Reviews, Notes, and Articles over years after publication.](image-url)
How to choose the right journal

Investigate all candidate journals on Elsevier.com to find out:

– Aims and scope
– Types of articles accepted
– Journal’s readership/audience
– Journal’s current hot topics
  • go through the abstracts of recent publications
  • check the Article in Press section for latest accepted articles

– Go to Journal Finder on Elsevier’s Author home
  • enter keywords from your article to search SciVerse ScienceDirect for suggested journals.
Choosing the right journal cont..

- Ask for help from your supervisor or colleagues
  - The supervisor (who is often a co-author) has co-responsibility for your work.

- DO NOT gamble by submitting your manuscript to more than one journal at a time.
  - International ethics standards prohibit multiple/simultaneous submissions, and editors WILL find out! (see also our webcast on publishing ethics www.elsevier.com/editorsupdate).

**TIP:** Articles in your references will likely lead you to the right journal.
Choosing the right journal cont..
Summary – What steps do I need to take before I write my paper?

- Determine if you are ready to publish
- Decide on the type of manuscript
- Choose the target journal
- Carefully read the Guide for Authors

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How can I ensure I am using proper Manuscript language?
Why is language important?

Save your editor and reviewers having to struggle to guess what you mean

Complaint from an editor:

“This paper fell below my threshold for language. I refuse to spend time trying to understand what the author is trying to say. I really want to send a message that they can't submit bad writing to us and expect us to fix it. My rule of thumb is that if there are more than 6 grammatical errors in the abstract, then I don't spend my time carefully reading the rest.”
Do publishers correct language?

• No, publishers usually don’t. It is the author’s responsibility to make sure his paper is in its best possible form when submitted for publication.

• Editors and Reviewers will not provide language editing either. They don’t have the time.

• Typesetters will correct some errors – but an article needs to have been accepted first.
Services are available

- Publishers often provide resources for authors who are less familiar with the conventions of international journals. Please check your publishers’ author website for more information.

- Visit [http://webshop.elsevier.com](http://webshop.elsevier.com) for translation and language editing services. For a small fee these provide language editing within 6 working days.

- Some publishers may perform technical screening prior to peer review.
Manuscript Language – Overview

Write with clarity, objectivity, accuracy, and brevity

• Key to successful manuscript writing is to be alert to common errors:
  – Sentence construction
  – Incorrect tenses
  – Inaccurate grammar
  – Mixing languages

Check the Guide for Authors of the target journal for any language specifications

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Manuscript Language – Sentences

- Write direct and short sentences
  - long sentences confuse readers
  - Average length of sentence is between 12 – 17 words

- One idea or piece of information per sentence is sufficient

- Avoid multiple statements in one sentence

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Manuscript Language – Tenses

• Present tense for known facts and hypotheses:
  “The average life of a honey bee is 6 weeks”

• Past tense for experiments you have conducted:
  “All the honey bees were maintained in an environment with a consistent temperature of 23 degrees centigrade…”

• Past tense when you describe the results of an experiment:
  “The average life span of bees in our contained environment was 8 weeks…”
Manuscript Language – Grammar

• Use active voice to shorten sentences
  – Passive voice: “It has been found that there had been…”
  – Active voice: “We found that…”
  – Passive voice: “carbon dioxide was consumed by the plant…”
  – Active voice: “…the plant consumed carbon dioxide..”

• Avoid contractions: e.g. “it’s”, “weren’t”, “hasn’t”
  – Never use them in scientific writing
  – Only use abbreviations for units of measure or established scientific abbreviations, e.g. DNA, ANOVA
Manuscript Language – Grammar

• Minimize use of adverbs: “However”, “Moreover” “Nonetheless”

• Eliminate redundant phrases, even small ones

“Delete ‘In present report’. It is impossible for it to be in a different report! You start the conclusions "In this report, we have prepared....." This is nonsense. The samples were prepared in the laboratory!” - Editor
Finally, you should use English throughout the manuscript, including figures.
Summary – How can I ensure I am using proper manuscript language?

- Proper manuscript language is important so that editors and reviewers can easily understand your messages.
- Refer to the journal’s Guide for Authors for specifications.
- Check that your paper has short sentences, correct tenses, correct grammar, and is all in English.
- Have a native English speaker check your manuscript or use a language editing service.
How do I build up my article properly?
Read the ‘Guide for Authors’!

• You can find the Guide for Authors on the journal homepage on Elsevier.com

• Stick to the Guide for Authors in your manuscript, *even in the first draft* (text layout, nomenclature, figures & tables, references etc.). In the end it will save you time, and also the editor’s.

• Editors (and reviewers) do not like spending time on poorly prepared manuscripts.
General structure of a research article

- Title
- Abstract
- Keywords

Main text (IMRAD)
- Introduction
- Methods
- Results
- And
- Discussions

- Conclusions
- Acknowledgements
- References
- Supplementary Data

Journal space is not unlimited.
Make your article as concise as possible.

Make them easy for indexing and searching!
(informative, attractive, effective)

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However, we often write articles in the following order:

– Data, figures and tables

– Methods, Results and Discussion

– Conclusions and Introduction

– Abstract and title
Title

• A good title should contain the fewest possible words that adequately describe the content of a paper.
• Articles with short, catchy titles are often better cited
• Effective titles
  – Identify the main issue of the paper
  – Begin with the subject of the paper
  – Are accurate, unambiguous, specific, and complete
• Do not contain rarely-used abbreviations
Abstract

... is freely available in electronic abstracting & indexing services [PubMed, Medline, Embase, SciVerse Scopus...]

- This is the advertisement of your article. Make it interesting, and easy to understand without reading the whole article.
- You must be accurate and specific and brief.
- A clear abstract will strongly influence whether or not your work is further considered and how much it is read when published.

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# Keywords

**Used by indexing and abstracting services**

- They are the labels of your manuscript.
- Use only established abbreviations (e.g. DNA)
- Check the ‘Guide for Authors’ for guidance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Article Title</th>
<th>Keywords</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Teens telling tales: How maternal and peer audiences support narrative identity development”</td>
<td>Narrative identity; Autobiographical memory; Identity; Past event conversations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Who knows what’s good to eat? Infants fail to match the food preferences of antisocial others”</td>
<td>Social evaluation; social learning/imitation; negativity bias</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction

Provides context to convince readers that you clearly know why your work is useful

• Be brief

• Clearly address the following:
  – What is the problem?
  – Are there any existing solutions?
  – Which solution is the best?
  – What is its main limitation?
  – What do you hope to achieve?

• Try to be consistent with the nature of the journal
Methods

Describe how the problem was studied

• Include detailed information
• Do not describe previously published procedures
• Identify the equipment and describe materials used
Results: what have you found?

- Tell a clear and easy-to-understand story
- Include the main findings from the research
- Findings from experiments described in the Methods section
- Highlight findings that differ from findings in previous publications, and unexpected finding
- Results of the statistical analysis
- Add Supplementary Materials for data of secondary importance
Results – Figures and tables

- Illustrations are critical, because
  - Figures and tables are the most efficient way to present results and;
  - Results are the driving force of the publication

- Captions and legends must be detailed enough to make figures and tables self-explanatory

- No duplication of results described in text or other illustrations

"One Picture is Worth a Thousand Words"
Sue Hanauer (1968)
Discussion

What the results mean

• Most important section

• Make the Discussion correspond to the Results

• You need to compare published results with yours
Conclusion

How the work advances the field from the present state of knowledge

• Should be clear

• Justify your work in the research field

• Suggest future experiments
References

Cite the main scientific publications on which your work is based

• Do not use too many references

• Always ensure you have fully absorbed material you are referencing and do not just rely on checking excerpts or isolated sentences

• Avoid excessive self-citations

• Avoid excessive citations of publications from the same region

• Conform strictly to the style given in the Guide for Authors
Acknowledgments

Ensures those who helped in the research are recognised

Include individuals who have assisted with your study, including:

• Advisors
• Financial supporters
• Proofreaders
• Typists
• Suppliers who may have given materials
Summary – How do I build up my article properly?

- Title
- Abstract
- Keywords

Main text (IMRAD)
- Introduction
- Methods
- Results
- And
- Discussions

- Structure your article properly
- Make sure each section of the paper fulfills its purpose clearly and concisely

- Conclusion
- Acknowledgement
- References
- Supporting Materials
Your chance to speak to the editor directly

- Submitted along with your manuscript
- Mention what would make your manuscript special to the journal
- Note special requirements (reviewers, conflicts of interest)

Final approval from all authors

Explanation of importance of research

Suggested reviewers

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One Last Look

Revise before submission

➢ Check the manuscript as thoroughly as possible before submission

➢ Ask colleagues and supervisors to review your manuscript

Finally, SUBMIT your manuscript with a cover letter and await a response...
After submission

- Refereeing speed varies tremendously between journals
- The Editor will decide to “Accept”, “Accept with Revision (Major or Minor)”, or “Reject” the manuscript
- Nearly every acceptable manuscript requires revision
- Reviewing is a process; learn from the referees comments and join the discussion
- Bear in mind that editors and reviewers mean to help you improve your article. Do not take offense
- Revise the whole manuscript, not just the parts the reviewers point out
2. Author Responsibilities & Rights

• Author Responsibilities – publication ethics

• Author Rights – using your article
Authorship: Order and Abuses

General principles for who is listed first

- **First Author:**
  - Conducts and/or supervises the data analysis and the proper presentation and interpretation of the results
  - Puts paper together and submits the paper to journal

- **Co-Author(s):**
  - Makes intellectual contributions to the data analysis and contributes to data interpretation
  - Reviews each paper draft
  - Must be able to present the results, defend the implications and discuss study limitations

Mistakes to be avoided

- **Ghost Authors:** leaving out authors who should be included

- **Scientific Writers and Gift Authors:** including authors when they did not contribute significantly
Author Responsibilities

- Originality
- Citations and context
- Conflicts of Interest
- Ethical submission practices
Issues with Originality

- **Fabrication**
  - Making up research data

- **Falsification**
  - Manipulation of existing research data

- **Plagiarism**
  - Plagiarism takes many forms, from “passing off” another’s paper as the author’s own paper, to copying or paraphrasing substantial parts of another’s paper (without attribution), to claiming results from research conducted by others

These three are the most common forms of ethical misconduct that the research community is challenged with.
Citations and Context

A researcher, in writing his research paper, mentions a concept that is reported in an article written by his advisor. Does he need to cite his advisor’s work and list the advisor’s article in the bibliography?

This is always a good idea

Crediting the work of others (even your advisor’s or your own previous work) and noting permissioned materials is important to place your work in the context of the advancement of the field and to acknowledge the findings of others on which you build your research.
Conflicts of Interest

Conflicts of interest can take many forms:

- Direct financial
  - Employment, stock ownership, grants, patents
- Indirect financial
  - Honoraria, consultancies, mutual fund ownership, expert testimony
- Career & intellectual
  - Promotion, direct rival
- Institutional

The proper way to handle potential conflicts of interest is through transparency and disclosure.

At the journal level, this means disclosure of the potential conflict in your cover letter to the journal editor.
Ethical submission practices

- You must only submit your manuscript to one journal at a time and wait to hear a decision before considering submitting the paper to another journal.

- Multiple, redundant, or concurrent publication issues
  - Ideally, the situation should be avoided where manuscripts that describe essentially the same research are published in more than one journal or primary publication.
  - Duplication of the same paper in multiple journals of different languages should be avoided.
  - “Salami slicing”, or creating several publications from the same research, is manipulative and discouraged.
Who is really responsible for Ethics?

- All stakeholders have a part to play in upholding ethics
  - Authors
  - Institutions/companies/agencies/funding bodies
  - Publishers/journal editors

- Full Membership of the Committee on Publishing Ethics (COPE) for all Elsevier journals as from 2009
- supports editors with a Publishing Ethics Resource Kit (PERK) to guide them in investigations of unethical behavior

COPE - http://www.publicationethics.org.uk/about
PERK - http://www.elsevier.com/wps/find/editorshome.editors/Introduction
A researcher is caught plagiarizing an article and fully admits to it.

What are the potential consequences and what actions can the publisher or the researcher’s institution/funding body take?

Potential consequences can vary according to the severity of the misconduct and the standards set by the journal editors, institutions and funding bodies. Possible actions include:

- Written letters of concern and reprimand
- Article retractions
- Some form of disciplinary action on the part of the researcher’s institute or funding body
Plagiarism Detection

Cross Check initiative (2009)

- Huge database: 26.6 million articles from 49,000 journals from 124 publishers
- iThenticate software shows similarities between the article and previously published articles
- Successfully piloted by 400 Editors in 2009, now widely used
Author Rights

What can I do with my Paper once it has been published?
Rights Retained by Authors

The rights retained by authors in publishing agreements usually address academic usage rights:

- Use of the work by the author in teaching
- Re-use in other scholarly works

Publishing agreements differ by publisher...
Publisher agreements do vary, but Elsevier generally allows authors the following uses:

- **Teaching**: allowed to make copies of the article for use in classroom teaching
- **Educational materials**: article can be included in the author’s institution or company e-course packs or company training
- **Scholarly sharing**: copies of the article can be shared with research colleagues
- **Meetings/conferences**: Article can be presented and copies can be made for attendees
- **Further works**: article can be used in compilations, expanded to book-form, or used in thesis or dissertation
- **Patent and trademark rights**: for any invention disclosed or product identified
Other Allowances & Restrictions

• Elsevier’s Posting Allowances
  – Pre-print version of article to internet websites
  – Revised personal version of text of final article to author’s personal or institutional website or server
  – According to funding body agreements (e.g. Wellcome Trust, HHMI, NIH)

  [www.elsevier.com/fundingbodies]

• Elsevier’s Commercial Purpose Prohibitions
  – Posting by companies for use by customers
  – Placing advertisements against postings
  – Charging fees for access or document delivery
  – Any form of systematic distribution
Questions?
Appendix
Every journal, platform and product at Elsevier is co-developed with ongoing community input. In 2011 we surveyed or consulted with thousands of individuals:

- Author Feedback Programme: 68,000+
- Reviewer Feedback Programme: 55,500+
- Editor Feedback Programme: 1,500+
- Purchaser/Customer Service Satisfaction: 14,000+
- Innovation Explorers: Researchers & Librarians: 8,000+, 600+
- Product Feedback Surveys: 31,000+
- Librarian Advisory Board: 600+, 24
Thank you

For writing/submission tips and author services:
www.elsevier.com/authors

For online trainings and tutorials:
http://trainingdesk.elsevier.com

For reviewer information and guidelines:
www.elsevier.com/reviewers