

Developing the Article for Publication

Why worry about writing effectively?

The Basic Fact: Knowledge exists only if it is communicated. Communication assumes that the message has been sent, received, and then accepted and used. You may have great ideas, but unless you can share these with others who will value your ideas, you will not be a member of the knowledge industry. Creating and disseminating knowledge is the fundamental goal of the academy. Members of the academy are expected to generate and disseminate knowledge. Writing is the fundamental means of dissemination

If you plan on pursuing an academic career, your ability to publish in high-quality journals will be critical to your success. If you don't have confidence in your writing—the effectiveness of what you write and your ability to write efficiently—graduate school is the time to develop both confidence and expertise in written communication. Universities have faculty who can help you write proficiently. Take advantage of faculty members' expertise, as faculty spend their careers writing a variety of documents—books, articles, proposals, committee reports, letters of recommendation, and even minutes of meetings. In short, faculty realize the value of effective written communication and are happy to help their students. Most faculty have learned useful techniques in how to write for a particular discipline. Asking them to share their expertise while you are in school will help you launch your academic career. So, don't be afraid to ask for help!

The following discussion has been developed to guide you through the development process of writing an article for publication in an academic journal. The scholarly or technical article is the most common communication product of the academy. Learning to generate articles requires that you learn and then apply a basic development process. Then, as you mature in your discipline, you will refine this process. To begin, however, you need to understand and begin practicing this basic process.

Very important: The best articles emerge from an author's belief that the information she/he will communicate **NEEDS** to be communicated, that an audience interested in the information exists. If you don't believe in what you write, your article will reflect your disinterest! Assuming that you have a topic that you believe in, here's a way to get started on developing your article.

Selecting a Journal

Determine an appropriate journal.

1. Don't ever "just start writing" and think you can worry about the journal later. Most journals have specific, targeted readers. Each journal has its own specific style. Even though your discipline or field of study may follow a specific style

sheet, such as APA, MLA, or AMA (for example), journals within fields differ. Within some fields, documentation styles vary widely.

2. As you think about writing your first article(s), determine which journals will be good venues. Ask your advisor to suggest a journal. Determine which journals may be suitable outlets for beginning authors. Read several issues of journals that you believe may be publication targets for your work. If you are collaborating with faculty or an article, ask questions about what a particular journal has been selected for an article on which you are working.
3. Solicit advice on the article you are planning. As faculty publish, they develop insight into editorial preferences of various journals. Many faculty know specific journal editors, members of a journal review boards, and the kinds of research most likely to be accepted for publication. Many faculty will be members of editorial boards or boards of reviewers. As you review back issues of the journal(s) you think will be appropriate outlets for your article, focus on the following:
 - a) Types of articles published within the past several years
 - b) Focus of the journal—subject matter covered; targeted readership
 - c) Instructions to authors often included in every issue or at least once a year)
 - d) Abstract type and length. Read abstracts from several articles.
 - e) Article length.
 - f) Level of language used. Many articles that include “Instructions to Authors” tell you about the readers the journal targets. If the journal targets a broad audience within a field, that information suggests that you may want to watch how much specialized nomenclature you use (perhaps with selected definitions in parenthesis).
 - g) Article style: headings, general plan of the articles, types of visuals, format for notes (endnotes or footnotes), documentation style, references/works cited, and visuals (tables, graphs, and figures).
4. Once you decide on the journal to which you will submit your article, strictly follow the submission guidelines provided by the journal. And, keep in mind advice you have received from faculty who may have published in this journal. Many journals include the email address of the journal and or the editor. If you have specific questions, send a concise email query to the journal or the editor.

Planning your article

Now, back to focusing on your article!

1. Save the attached article worksheet in a file that has a name that reflects your topic. Or print it and keep where you can find it.
2. Write the topic of your article. Then, phrase the purpose of your article. This step may take time, as you want your purpose to be clear and concise. Once you have a purpose statement that seems OK to you, highlight it in yellow. Why? Because you want to be sure that every word of your article is written to support the purpose statement. Good articles are focused: they don't include information not relevant to the purpose. If you have the purpose statement highlighted, then you are more likely to see it every time you open the file.
3. Explain, briefly, why your topic is important. Most readers want to know, ASAP, why they should continue to read your article. Every article must justify its value! Your readers are busy, and they can stop reading at any time. And they will stop reading unless your writing interests them in what you are saying.
4. Prepare for your [literature review](#) . These should be studies related to your topic, studies that help you justify your research and the article you are writing. For journal articles, focus on the essential studies. Summarize what each says as it relates to your article. Be sure that you document each study you mention in your literature review.
5. If you have articles you have printed, place a large number at the top of the first page of the article , e.g., [#2]. Then when you summarize the point made in the article you have numbered as [#2], add a parenthesis (#2, p. xx).

With this simple method of keeping track of where you found your ideas, you will be less likely to forget to give credit to your sources.

Once you complete these steps, you have the information you will need to write your introduction, which will be discussed later.

Presenting Your Research

1. If your article is a research report, please read the information under [Empirical Research Reports](#). This segment gives advice on planning and presenting empirical research. Empirical research articles share similarities. What is important: knowing how to develop each segment of the research report.
2. If you are reporting non-empirical scholarship, you will need to decide on the most effective way of supporting your article's purpose. Try this:
 - a) List the main ideas you plan to present to support your purpose.

- b) boldface each idea. Then, begin inserting text under each main idea. When you use an idea taken from an earlier study or article, be sure to include the source and page number—e.g. [5, pp. 201-202].

This way of composing has several advantages: (1) you can start/stop at various points. You don't have to develop your article "from beginning to end." As you work on your article, you can work on various sections, depending on what part of your article interests you most on a given day. If you find more research that's relevant, you can go back and add to your literature review section.

3. Use colored fonts and highlighting to ask yourself questions and add reminders of points you need to check. Writing is a process. Writing a publishable article takes time, patience, and planning. Let word processing help you keep track of ideas. You might want to use the "reviewing" toolbar so that you can insert comments and later add/delete these.

At some point in the development process, you may want to begin your conclusion. What, specifically, have you shown in your article or discussion? Look at each boldface idea; then look at the text you have inserted. Does your information adequately support the idea you are giving to support your article purpose? Look at each idea separately. Be as objective as possible. Does what you have written support the idea that appears in boldface?

As you read and reread each section, you will want to begin to edit your text.

4. Break supporting ideas into paragraphs. Keep your paragraphs a reasonable length, and keep your sentences from becoming long and unwieldy. Long paragraphs and long sentences tend to obscure meaning and discourage readers. At this point, you may want to review the segments on [creating effective sentences](#).
5. Try reading each paragraph aloud. If you have trouble speaking a sentence, then rewrite it! Use a language that is appropriate for the audience of the journal to which you plan to submit your article.
6. After you complete a draft of your article, focus on documentation style. Be sure that you know the documentation style required by the journal. Develop your list of sources, references, works cited, or whatever term your journal uses.

By keeping track of all material you use in your literature review or the body of your article, you can easily develop your list of references and then do the individual citations to match what is required by the journal.

5. Let your article cool for several days. Reread, revise, and ask a colleague in your field to read your article. If you have to publish papers as a requirement for graduation, your thesis advisor will likely be happy to read your draft and make suggestions for improvement.

6. Write your [introduction](#). Examine examples of introductions of articles in the journal you are targeting for your article. How long are these? Is the literature review part of the introduction? Is it a separate entity in the journal? As the introduction material states, you need to “introduce” your topic to your reader—state your purpose, provide any background that helps readers understand your purpose, and develop a concise review of previous studies (literature review) that shows how your article fills an information need about the topic you are discussing.

Since introductions can vary greatly in length, be sure to follow examples in articles previously published in the journal.

7. Write your [abstract](#). Examine abstracts from the journal you have selected to submit your article. Be sure your abstract conforms to the length stipulated. Add a list of Key Words if the journal requests those. Be sure that your abstract includes—at a minimum—the purpose of your article and your main findings. You may wish to review the segment on abstracts <abstracts>.