



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Tips for Early Career Authors

This advice has been put together by Cambridge University Press to support early career scholars and encourage them to submit appropriate work as journal articles

A short history of journal publishing

- **1323:** Compagnie du Gai Sçavoir, the oldest learned society on record, is founded in Toulouse, France.
- **1660:** The [Royal Society of London](#) is founded.
- **1665:** *Journal des Sçavans* and [Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London](#) are first published. Each journal used some form of peer review, although not exactly like today's version. *Philosophical Transactions* published famous scientists such as Newton, Hooke, van Leeuwenhoek, Faraday, and Darwin.
- **1731:** *Medical Essays and Observations*, the first fully peer-reviewed journal, is launched by the Royal Society of Edinburgh.
- **1743:** The [American Philosophical Society](#), the first scholarly society in what is now the US, is created.
- **1848:** The [American Association for the Advancement of Science](#) is founded. AAAS publishes the journal [Science](#) and is the largest general scientific society in the world.
- **1869:** [Nature](#) publishes its first issue.
- **1880:** [Science](#) publishes its first issue.
- **1947:** [Elsevier](#), the longtime publishing giant, launches its first international journal, [Biochimica et Biophysica Acta](#).
- **1990:** [Postmodern Culture](#) becomes the first online-only journal with no printed version available
- **1991:** [arXiv](#), the science pre-print server, is launched.
- **2003:** The [Public Library of Science](#) (PLOS) is founded.
- **2006:** [PLOS ONE](#), the wildly successful open access [megajournal](#), begins publishing. In 2013, *PLOS ONE* published [31,500 articles!](#)
- **2010:** The [altmetrics manifesto](#), describing potential new ways to gauge the impact of research beyond citations and impact factors, is written.
- **2012:** Several innovative and relatively new journals, including [F1000 Research](#), [PeerJ](#), and [eLife](#), are launched. These journals are experimenting with new forms of peer review, new business models, and new funding sources.

Getting articles published in peer-reviewed journals

What should I publish on?

- Read widely around your research area to see what is topical and what others are writing and presenting on
- Journals are looking for scholarship that says something new; is there an aspect of your research that is particularly innovative or adds a new perspective to the current literature. Make sure you clearly highlight the contribution of your research in the article
- Journals and reviewers want to be excited, only submit a paper that you feel excited about yourself
- Is there a topic you would like to test for a book; it is entirely appropriate to publish a few articles on a topic that will later become a book
- Discuss your ideas with colleagues and consider testing your topic at a workshop or conference before writing a full article

Which journal should I publish in?

- Ask colleagues which journals they recommend for your particular topic
- Read the scope of any potential journal carefully, if your article does not fit the scope of the journal it will likely be immediately rejected or time will be wasted when it could be being evaluated by a more appropriate journal; spend time looking at previous content published by the journal to evaluate your fit
- Consider what kind of audience you are hoping for – if a large audience is important than a generalist journal might be most appropriate; if you want to reach those most interested in your field, then a specialist journal may be the best way to go

How can I make my article more 'publishable'?

- Think about what the peer reviewers will be looking for; they want to be excited
- Be explicit about the something 'new' that your article is adding to the literature
- Write in clear English and if English is not your first-language consider using a professional editing service; ask colleagues to proof-read your work
- Pay attention to the title and abstract; the title should clearly describe your topic and make the piece easily discoverable online; the abstract should be a succinct summary; provide key words when appropriate/required
- Make sure that your argument flows logically, using clear headings to break up the text
- Take time to check your citations thoroughly and ensure they are complete; ensure you reference the related literature accurately and completely and do not change its meaning to support your argument

- Be careful to make sure your article would be of interest to a global audience
- Ensure you are happy that your article is complete; do not expect to finesse your text or add additional material at a later stage
- Once you have chosen a journal to submit to, use that journal's instructions for authors or style guide to ensure the article is put into journal style
- Ensure you have adhered to any word limit for your selected journal (being over or under word count is likely to result in immediate rejection)
- If a journal requires work to be anonymised, please eliminate any author details and anonymise any citations that refer to your own work
- Closely follow the submission instructions for your chosen journal, for example, an electronic submission system like ScholarOne may be required
- If a journal has an exclusive submission policy, please abide by this. Finding out an article has been submitted to another journal at the same time is likely to frustrate the editorial team and discourage publication this time or in the future

What happens after submission?

- Many papers are simply desk rejected without ever going to reviewers, a common reason is being out of scope of the journal
- Other articles will proceed to double-blind peer review (neither author or reviewer will know the identity of the other) or single-blind (only reviewer will know the identity of the author but author will not know identity of reviewer)
- Common decisions are reject, revise and resubmit, accept with minor or major revisions, very few journals give out straight accepts

How should I respond to a revise and resubmit decision?

- Take seriously any revisions suggested
- Include with your revised manuscript a note on how you have responded to reviewer comments; if you have not made the suggested amendments say why ; provide a detailed list of changes

What should I expect if my article is accepted for publication?

- Respond to any queries from the editorial team or any copyeditor promptly
- Expect your article to be edited by the journal's editorial team – treat these edits constructively, they have been made to bring the best out of your article
- Be ready to check proofs quickly (most journals give 3–5 days for this process)
- Proof corrections should be limited to typos and errors of law, substantial changes to your article are not allowed by any journal at this stage
- Expect to be asked to transfer your copyright to the journal and complete any documentation relating to this with care

- Check the re-use and self-archiving policy of the journal carefully before considering re-publishing or archiving in a repository (Green OA)
- Once published, think about how you can help promote usage of your article, for example through social media, see a useful guide here: http://www.cambridge.org/files/5814/8094/3687/Top_10_ways_to_promote_your_articles_V2.pdf

What is the best way to move on from a rejection?

- Ask for reasons if you are not given them
- Try another journal but consider amending your article to respond to reviewer comments before you do; the same reviewers could easily appear on another journal and you do not want to insult them
- Do not be afraid to send a more suitable piece to the journal in the future
- Consider other types of submission such as writing a book review (a good way to show you are eager to write as well as increasing your profile and network of contacts)
- Become involved with journals as a board member or peer reviewer to learn more about the publishing process

Language editing services (by AJE)

Cambridge offers a range of high-quality manuscript preparation services – including language editing – delivered in partnership with American Journal Experts. More details can be found here: <https://www.cambridge.org/academic/author-services/>

Cambridge and ORCID

ORCID is a not-for-profit organisation that provides unique identifiers for researchers. The identifiers are alphanumeric, non-proprietary free codes stored in an open and independent registry. ORCID stands for Open Researcher and Contributor ID and is heavily supported by thousands of institutions, publishers and other academic organisations.

A free ORCID ID provides the means to reliably identify an author, regardless of name similarity, name changes, discipline changes and variations in the ways that names are presented. In turn, this has the potential to improve the world of scholarly communication for both author and publisher.

Further tips for authors

Cambridge has created a series of guides for authors on various areas which can be found here: <https://www.cambridge.org/authorhub/>