



Preparation and Submission



Preparation for Submission

1. Sit on the finished version for one week

- After the paper is completed, do not immediately submit it to a journal. (It is not finished yet.)
- You invariably will find many small errors in text, notations, explanations, or missing references, etc. in your finished paper.

2. Reread the introduction, conclusion, and abstract before submission

- Reread these three parts carefully before you submit the paper to a journal and eliminate all typographical errors and other embarrassing mistakes.
- A typographical error on the first page of introduction or abstract indicates that the author is careless.
- Such errors tend to lead referees and editors, rightly or wrongly, to conclude that the paper should be rejected. They conclude that the author is likely to be sloppy in substance as well. And they might be right.
- If you don't proofread your own introduction, why expect the referees to spot and correct all the errors?

3. Use, but do not rely totally on spelling checkers

- One should always check spelling before submission. But there are no substitutes for reading the papers personally.
- Spelling checkers do not check word meanings.

4. Do not arouse envy

- Do not use fancy fonts or expensive bond paper.
- Do not cite too many of your own papers.

- The referees might feel that you have published too many papers.
- The referees might feel justified to recommend rejection of your paper.
- Especially when he/she received one recently.
- Do not thank famous people in the acknowledgment, at least not in the first submission. The referee's contacts may not be as good as yours.
- Do not thank family members. This is understandable, but it is unprofessional.

5. Use common sense

- It is not a good idea to send a hand-written submission letter. The submission letter contains critical information about the author (address, telephone number, e-mail address, etc.) Your scribbling may be a challenge to the deciphering ability of the editors or their assistants. A small typographical error in the address might make a letter to the author undeliverable. Here is an example:

$\frac{d}{dt} \ln \left(\frac{1}{\rho} \right) = - \frac{1}{\rho} \frac{d\rho}{dt}$
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[illegible]

1. What is the purpose of the study?
 The purpose of the study is to determine the effect of the use of a computer program on the learning of the English language.

From the results of (1) and (2), we can see that the proposed algorithm is more efficient than the existing algorithms.

2. *Conspicuous* (adj.) - 1. easily seen or noticed; 2. prominent; 3. obvious; 4. striking; 5. remarkable; 6. noticeable; 7. apparent; 8. evident; 9. clear; 10. plain; 11. manifest; 12. obvious; 13. apparent; 14. evident; 15. clear; 16. plain; 17. manifest; 18. obvious; 19. apparent; 20. evident; 21. clear; 22. plain; 23. manifest; 24. obvious; 25. apparent; 26. evident; 27. clear; 28. plain; 29. manifest; 30. obvious; 31. apparent; 32. evident; 33. clear; 34. plain; 35. manifest; 36. obvious; 37. apparent; 38. evident; 39. clear; 40. plain; 41. manifest; 42. obvious; 43. apparent; 44. evident; 45. clear; 46. plain; 47. manifest; 48. obvious; 49. apparent; 50. evident; 51. clear; 52. plain; 53. manifest; 54. obvious; 55. apparent; 56. evident; 57. clear; 58. plain; 59. manifest; 60. obvious; 61. apparent; 62. evident; 63. clear; 64. plain; 65. manifest; 66. obvious; 67. apparent; 68. evident; 69. clear; 70. plain; 71. manifest; 72. obvious; 73. apparent; 74. evident; 75. clear; 76. plain; 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152. evident; 153. clear; 154. plain; 155. manifest; 156. obvious; 157. apparent; 158. evident; 159. clear; 160. plain; 161. manifest; 162. obvious; 163. apparent; 164. evident; 165. clear; 166. plain; 167. manifest; 168. obvious; 169. apparent; 170. evident; 171. clear; 172. plain; 173. manifest; 174. obvious; 175. apparent; 176. evident; 177. clear; 178. plain; 179. manifest; 180. obvious; 181. apparent; 182. evident; 183. clear; 184. plain; 185. manifest; 186. obvious; 187. apparent; 188. evident; 189. clear; 190. plain; 191. manifest; 192. obvious; 193. apparent; 194. evident; 195. clear; 196. plain; 197. manifest; 198. obvious; 199. apparent; 200. evident; 201. clear; 202. plain; 203. manifest; 204. obvious; 205. apparent; 206. evident; 207. clear; 208. plain; 209. manifest; 210. obvious; 211. apparent; 212. evident; 213. clear; 214. plain; 215. manifest; 216. obvious; 217. apparent; 218. evident; 219. clear; 220. plain; 221. manifest; 222. obvious; 223. apparent; 224. evident; 225. clear; 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596. evident; 597. clear;

- Use a sturdy envelope, especially, if you are sending a manuscript to a foreign country. An enclosed check might be missing from the package by the time it reaches the editorial office.
- You do not want your package to arrive at the editorial office looking like these:



6. Consider electronic submission if allowed by journals

- Journal offices increasingly are more willing to receive electronic submissions.
- Electronic submissions are faster and safer.
- Word processor files can damage the hard disk of the journal office. For this reasons, they prefer PDF files.
- When submitting to journals that adopt double-blind refereeing process, submit the cover page and the main body separately. Remove your name in the document property (Your computer may record it automatically.)
- Experienced people report that Acrobat PDF Writer does not always produce dependable PDF files.
- Use the [dependable Acrobat Distiller](#). For instance, after the Acrobat is installed, you can print a Word document using Acrobat Distiller and save it at a desired drive. You can then e-mail the file.
- After a PDF file is produced, go over it to see if all [symbols](#) are properly represented. If a symbol is not properly converted by Adobe Distiller, try retyping it using another font. Avoid using [nonstandard](#) symbols, because Acrobat Distiller may not convert them properly.
- Visit the NSF site concerning problems you encounter when creating PDF files, <http://www.fastlane.nsf.gov/a1/pdfcreat.htm>.



Working Papers

7. Present an early version as a working paper

- If a paper contains enough substance of a roughly sketched idea, you may offer it as a working paper, just for the record.
- Distribute it to a dozen trusted friends in your field to get feedback.
- But do not distribute it widely.
- Working papers can attract coauthors, and a revised version may be published later. When you are up for promotion and tenure, the working papers provide evidence that you have started the work.

8. Do not submit your working paper to an electronic journal

- Get ready for the future of publishing. Most journals will become available electronically over the coming years. Hard copies may still be available, but they will be expensive because of limited print runs.
- You may submit abstracts to journals on the Internet, but it is not advisable to post the actual articles.
- For legal purposes, the electronic publications may be treated as publications. But for tenure and promotion purposes, they do not count as publications. This is a problem.
- It is easy for someone to manipulate the electronic copy (even PDF or PS files), modify it a little, and submit it to another journal under a different title.



Acknowledgment

9. Remove negative clues from acknowledgment

- In the acknowledgment, remove any reference to when the paper was conceived or written.
- Editors of journals that adopt the double-blind review procedure are not likely to send papers to persons mentioned in the acknowledgment.

- Do not thank in the acknowledgment the people whom you would like to serve as referees. Acknowledge them after the paper is accepted. Otherwise, they are likely to be left out of the review process.
 - Once you receive an invitation to publish, include an acknowledgment to the referees, whether anonymous or not.
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Submission

10. Eliminate any trace of prior rejections

- Do not indicate when the paper was first written. If the original version was written a few years earlier, the editors and the referees clearly see that it has been rejected a few times.
- Do not indicate how often the paper has been revised. This suggests you do not listen and properly modify the paper to make it more publishable.
- In the references, eliminate any references to papers that were "forthcoming" a few years back. This not only indicates that your paper was previously rejected a few times, but also that you are sloppy in updating the references.

11. Submit your paper to a rising journal

- Good specialty journals are rising.
- The acceptance rate may be higher. Payoff is greater later.
- Identify and avoid the declining journals whose acceptance rate is low with a diminishing payoff later.
- General journals, except for a few at the top, are expected to decline because of increased specialization and the resulting drop in demand for them. In general journals, "readers are confronted with a decreasing probability of finding at least one important article" (Holub, Tappeiner, and Eberharter, 1991) in their field.
- In the 1970s, the top ten journals were general journals.

- In the 1990s, half of the top ten journals were field journals.
- As you become more specialized, an increasingly smaller fraction of papers in general journals become relevant to your research. Accordingly, demand for general journals is likely to decline.
- Increased specialization is more likely in the future.

12. Keep a log of research papers

- In the first two or three years when the number of articles under review is small, it is easy to remember the status of your papers. Later, as the number of articles increases, a log will prove invaluable.
- The purpose of a log is to
 - know when to send a reminder to the editor,
 - prevent resubmission of a rejected paper to the same journal, unless of course, it is your intention to resubmit the rejected paper to the same journal (after a change of editors), and
 - avoid multiple submission of several papers to the same journal within a short period of time.
- For each paper, note the pool of potential journals.
- When a paper is rejected, do not lose time resubmitting the paper to another journal.
- Keep a log of the life history of each paper.

13. Do not submit two papers to the same journal in two months

- Especially if the two articles are related.
- Other things being equal, editors prefer to publish two articles by different authors, rather than two articles by the same author.
- You may submit more papers to the same journal simultaneously if there is more than one editor. They do not often communicate with one another. In this instance, acceptance of one article by one editor does not adversely affect the chance of another being accepted by a different editor.

14. Check for related articles in the journal being considered

- Try to find some related articles in the journal to which you wish to submit your paper.

- Authors who published a paper on a related subject are likely to be referees. The editor's memory is still fresh.
- Obviously, you need to say something about, or at least cite, their papers.
- Even if they are marginally related, try to incorporate their references. Make some effort to explain how your work is related.

15. Avoid the journals which consistently reject your papers

- Haven't you learned your lesson yet?
- Avoid (temporarily) the journals which have rejected your papers consistently, say three times in a row.
- The editor still remembers all those bad remarks about your papers.
- Wait until a new editor is appointed.
- First and middle names, as well as last name, often reveal the sex, race, or nationality of the authors.
- If you have reason to believe that you are being discriminated against on the basis of sex, race, or nationality, you may consider using initials instead of spelling out the first and middle names.
- You may reveal your full name after the paper is accepted.

16. Use professional editorial assistance

- Particularly if you are not a native English speaker
- Editors will not publish papers with grammatical errors.
- It is safe to assume that referees are biased; they have an excuse to recommend rejection when grammatical errors are detected.
- You can easily find a copy editor who charges a reasonable fee.
- Editorial help is available in the English department of any university in the United States or the United Kingdom. If you live elsewhere, you need to invest some time to develop friends located there. You may be able to check and expedite the editing process through them.

17. Know the preferences or biases of journals

- If a journal rarely publishes empirical papers, do not send one there.
- Similarly, if a journal rarely publishes theory papers, do not submit one there.

- If you suspect discrimination, check the past issues of the journal in question. This will reveal surprising insights.
- Preferences are known; biases are difficult to detect.
- There are three types of journals:
 - Association journals (AER, Econometrica, etc.)
 - University journals, managed and edited by university faculty (QJE, JPE, etc.)
 - Journals published by commercial publishers (Blackwell, North-Holland, etc.)

Problems of Journals

- Association journals: Editors change every few years, and they tend to accept more papers by colleagues and friends while they are at the helm. Since the editors are chosen from among a few major institutions, they tend to get a larger share of publications than under ideal academic conditions. Subsidized by associations.
- University journals: Promoting truth and knowledge is *not* necessarily the primary concern of these journals. The universities need to protect their own interests. They should set a good example by announcing that their editorial standards are not compromised to protect their own interests, but do they have the courage? Subsidized by universities.
- Commercial journals: To maximize profits they are least likely to have preferences or biases. However, they cannot survive without reader subscriptions.

Clan Power and Publication

- Roughly half of the papers published in some 40 high-ranked economic journals are never cited by others (Holub, Tappeiner, and Eberharter, SEJ 1991). Journals included in their studies were: AER, CJE, EJ, EER, IER,

JDE, JEL, JET, JMCB, JPE, JPubE, OEP, QJE, RES, REStat, SEJ, Econometrica, Economica, and Economic Inquiry among others.

- Even their referees would not cite these papers. This indicates that they did not place a high value on the papers. Why would these referees then recommend their publication?
- This finding suggests that in each field there may be small groups that exert some influence by recommending publication of the papers by their clan members.
- The clan members, implicit or explicit, are rent seekers. They recommend publication of their own papers at the expense of nonmembers.
- An effective way for a newcomer to beat the clans is to join them by collaborating with a clan member.
- The double-blind review process tends to reduce the power of clan members.
- Even with the double-blind review process, referees often know or guess the identity of authors because papers are circulated prior to submission.
- Circulation of working papers prior to acceptance effectively reveals the identity of the author and increases the rent that accrues to clan members.

How long to wait for results

18. Contact the editor after six months

- Editors do not have an alarm clock that goes off for each paper after a certain period of time has elapsed.
- If it has been six months from the date of acknowledgment, you should contact the editor.
- If you are counting from the date of your submission, allow seven months.
- Remember that the editors of many top journals are older and lack computer skills. So e-mail is not an option. If this is the case, write a polite letter.
- If you do not get a response within two months, send a second inquiry.
- Call the editorial office or inquire via fax.

- If you still get no reply after a third inquiry, you should not submit a paper to such a journal again.
- An e-mail inquiry is okay, if the editorial office is so equipped.
- Note that e-mail inquiry is less formal and e-mail traffic is increasing.
- E-mail messages are less reliable; they may not reach the editorial office.