

How to get published in a high quality journal

Royal Society
Publishing



Royal Society

The Royal Society is the UK's independent academy of science. It is a Fellowship of many of the world's most eminent scientists from all areas of science, technology, engineering, and medicine.

The Society's mission is to recognise, promote and support excellence in science and to support the development and use of science for the benefit of humanity.

- **Journal publishing**
- **Grants**
- **Policy work**
- **Scientific meetings**
- **Public events**
- **Science history**

Today our prestigious journals are world-renowned, international publications that welcome submissions from all scientific disciplines.

**PROCEEDINGS
OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY B**

BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES

**PROCEEDINGS
OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY A**

MATHEMATICAL, PHYSICAL AND ENGINEERING SCIENCES

**OPEN
BIOLOGY**

**ROYAL SOCIETY
OPEN SCIENCE**

**PHILOSOPHICAL TRANSACTIONS
OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY B**

BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES

**NOTES AND
RECORDS**

THE ROYAL SOCIETY JOURNAL OF THE HISTORY OF SCIENCE

**PHILOSOPHICAL TRANSACTIONS
OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY A**

MATHEMATICAL, PHYSICAL AND ENGINEERING SCIENCES

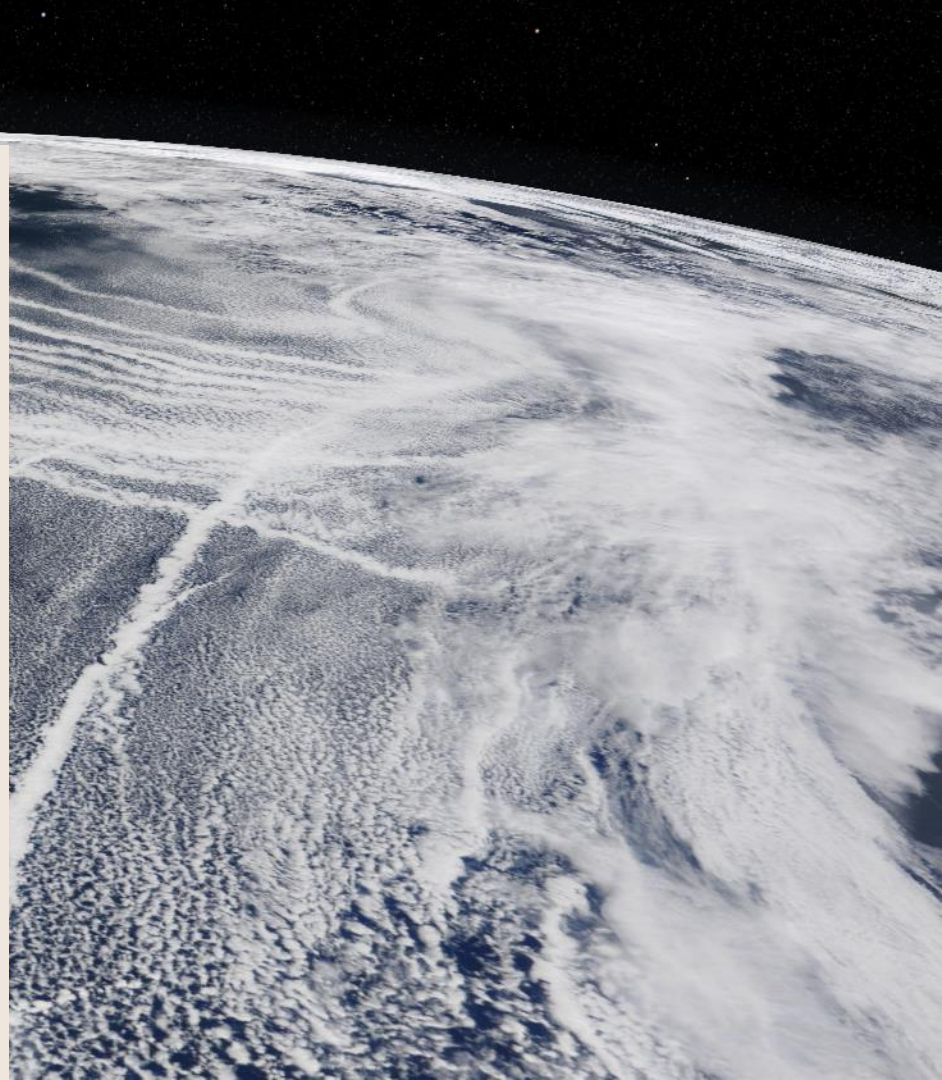
**JOURNAL OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY
INTERFACE**

**INTERFACE
FOCUS**

**BIOLOGY
LETTERS**

Part 1: Things to consider when choosing a journal

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Why is it important to select the right journal?

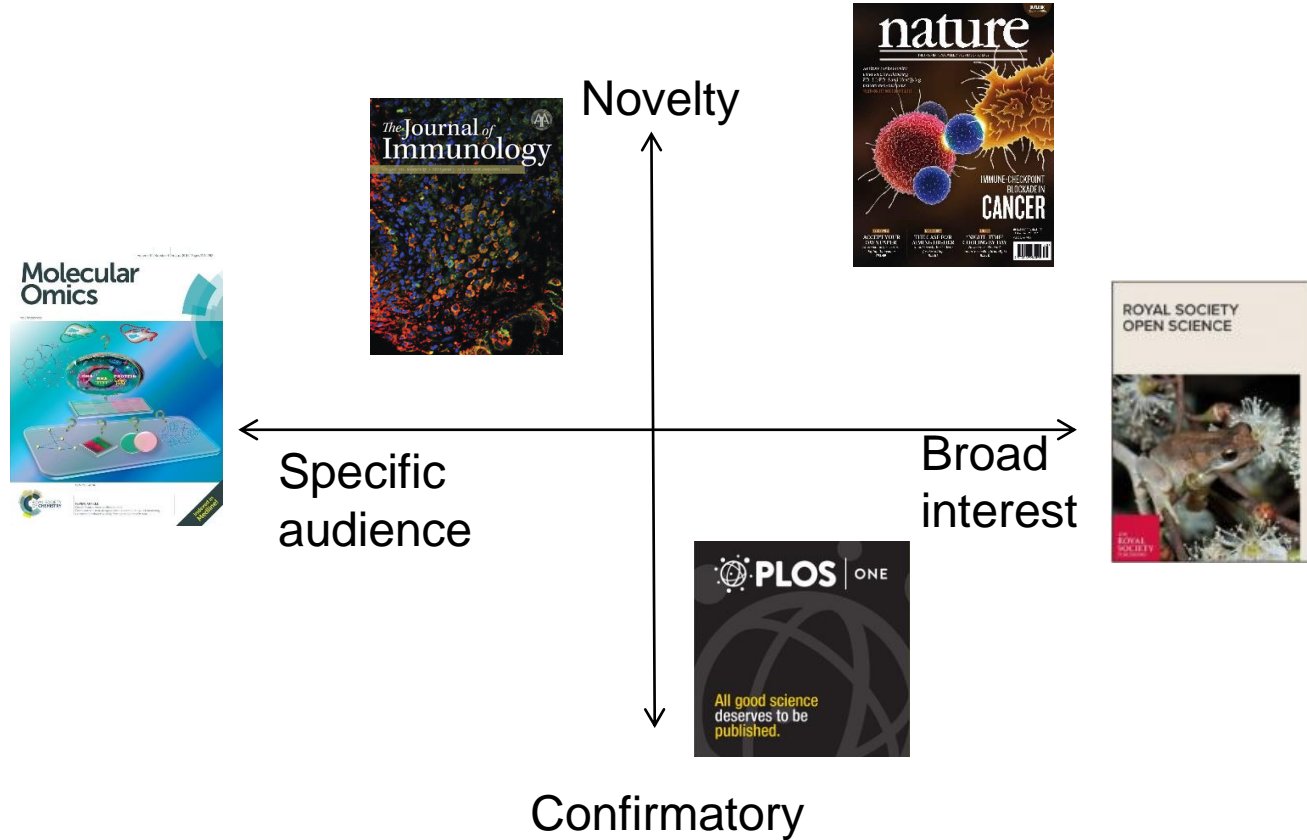
- To reach the right audience
- To make sure it is assessed by the right people
- To comply with requirements of your institution or funder
- To help disseminate your work to new audiences



If you submit to the most appropriate journal, the process of review and publication will be **as fast as possible** with the **best chance of success**

Ask yourself

- How novel is your work?
- Is it a 'hot' topic?
- Will it be of interest to broad audience?
- What type of article is it?



Different journals reach different audiences



- Very broad, cross discipline
- “Ground-breaking” science



- Read by immunologists
- Variety of subjects around a central theme
- Significant advances in the field



- Very niche audience
- Less significant advances specific to the field



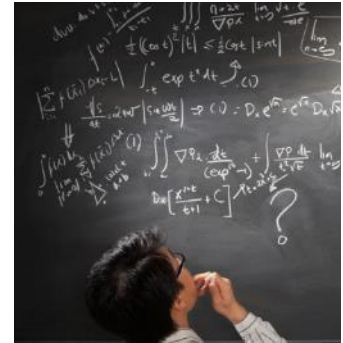
- Broad scope journal
- Publishes any sound science

Assessing a journal's suitability



Scope / subject area

- Does the journal publish in the field?
- Have you seen similar papers to yours there? Does it publish the type of paper that you have written (e.g. methods papers, opinion pieces etc.)
- Do you and your peers read and/or cite articles from this publication?
- Do you know authors who have published there?
- Do you recognise names on the Editorial Board?



Who will find and read your paper?



Is the journal indexed in all of the places that you browse to find new research?



Is content free to access or only for subscribers? Is there delayed free access?

Web of Science

Does the publisher offer free access to developing countries?



Does the publisher do press releases and marketing of individual papers?



Journal metrics

It isn't all about the Impact Factor!

Look at other citation metrics e.g. Eigenfactor, SCImago Journal Rank

Some journals now publish their 'citation distribution'

Look at the performance of an individual paper – citations, Altmetrics and download data.



Google Scholar



Get my own profile

Citation indices	All	Since 2012
Citations	6255	4795
h-index	36	32
i10-index	69	64



How fast would your paper be processed?



Many journals advertise their average decision times

Look at the date stamps on published papers in the journal

Ask the publisher

Remember that times given are averages and the time for your paper will depend on availability of Editors and reviewers and whether they meet deadlines

What will the journal offer you?

Do you like the look and functionality of the content online?

Does the journal have high production standards?

Will they be able to cater for any special requirements, e.g. video content, large data sets?

Do they provide tools to help you to disseminate your research?



Fees

- **Open access**
- **Colour figures**
- **Page charges**
- **Submission fee**

Make sure that you are aware of what you might have to pay, and that you have the necessary funds available.

If you can't pay, contact the journal as there may be waivers available.



Remember to check your funder's requirements, e.g. whether you have to publish under an open access model (check using Sherpa Juliet <http://v2.sherpa.ac.uk/juliet/>).

Who will profit?

All publishers benefit financially from your research, either through fees or by library subscriptions.

Journals may be owned by:

- An academic society or academy
- A commercial publisher
- Another not-for-profit organisation

Income from journals publishing often allows societies to fund researchers, hold meetings or give prizes for example.

Final point – ensure that the journal is reputable

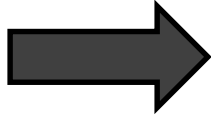
- New journals are launched all the time
- Stories of predatory publishing, malpractice and peer review scandals are increasing
- Your reputation is important and damage is hard to fix!
- *Think Check Submit.* Offers guidelines in many languages





Part 2: Understanding the publishing process

What will happen to your paper?



**The journal
black box**

Outcomes

Editorial rejection

Post-review rejection

Rejection and resubmission

Major revisions

Minor revisions

Accepted



Who would be handling your paper?

Does the journal have in-house professional Editors or do they use practicing scientists?

Have a look at the Editors and Editorial Board and see if you recognise any names



EDITOR-IN-CHIEF Spencer C. H. Barrett	Sandra Diaz Damian Dowling John Drake Sarah DuRant Hans Ellegren
REVIEWS EDITOR Innes Cuthill	Jan Engelstadter Robert Ewers Karen Evans Cassandra Extavour Vanessa Ezenwa Roberto Feuda Diana Fisher Kristian Forbes Norma Fowler
EDITORS Victoria Braithwaite Sarah Brosnan Gary R. Carvalho Daniel P. Costa Sasha Dall Hans A. P. Hoesterbeek John Hutchinson Loeske Kruuk	Becca Franks Megan Frederickson Susanne Fritz Oscar Gaggiotti Laura Galloway Fernando Garcia-Arenal James Gillooly Peter Girguis Julia Gog Melvyn A. Goodale Swanne Gordon Wolfgang Goymann Andrea S. Griffin Katy Heath Jessica Hellmann Katherine Harbom Lydia Hopper Vincent A. A. Jansen Marc Johnson Steve Johnson Tadousz Kawecki Julia Korchiava Marty Kriksak Shou-Hsien Li Martin Llewellyn Janice Lough Xiaoya Ma Alexei Maklakov Peter Makovicky Judith Mank George Mather Melodie McGeoch Katie McGhee Emily Jane McTavish Tamra C. Mendelsohn Juha Merilä Armin P. Moczek Amanda Moehring Péter Molnár Juan Manuel Morales
PUBLISHING EDITOR Shalene Singh-Shepherd	
EDITORIAL COORDINATORS Jennifer Kren Buchi Okerefor Callum Shoosmith	
PRODUCTION EDITOR Simon Clarkson	
ASSOCIATE EDITORS Jessica Abbott Lynn Adler Doug Altshuler Catherine Amis William Amos Bruce Anderson Rob Barton Karl Bates Ilana Baums Line K. Bay Beatrix Belsner Ricardo Betancur R. Martin Bidartondo Richard Blob Mike Boots Rachel Bowden Charlotte Brassey Jon Brindley Michael Brockhurst Mark I. Brown Jim Bull Oliver Burman Carlos Daniel Cadena Barbara Caspers Peter Conway Daniel Coombs Christine Cooper Will Cornwell Wayne Davies	

The role of the handling Editor

- Assess the suitability and novelty for the journal
- Oversee the peer review process
- Reject papers that are out of scope (to limit the workload of reviewers)
- Look for evidence of misconduct and deal with any ethical issues
- Answer queries from authors or reviewers relating to the scientific content



What is the review process?

Many journals will have details about their process on their website.

Is it 'single blind', 'double blind' or 'open' peer review?

Read the 'Instructions for reviewers' if available to see what reviewers are asked to consider.

Can your reviews be transferred from another journal (cascade)?

Single-blind

Reviewers are anonymous but author names are revealed



Double-blind

Authors and reviewers both anonymous



Open

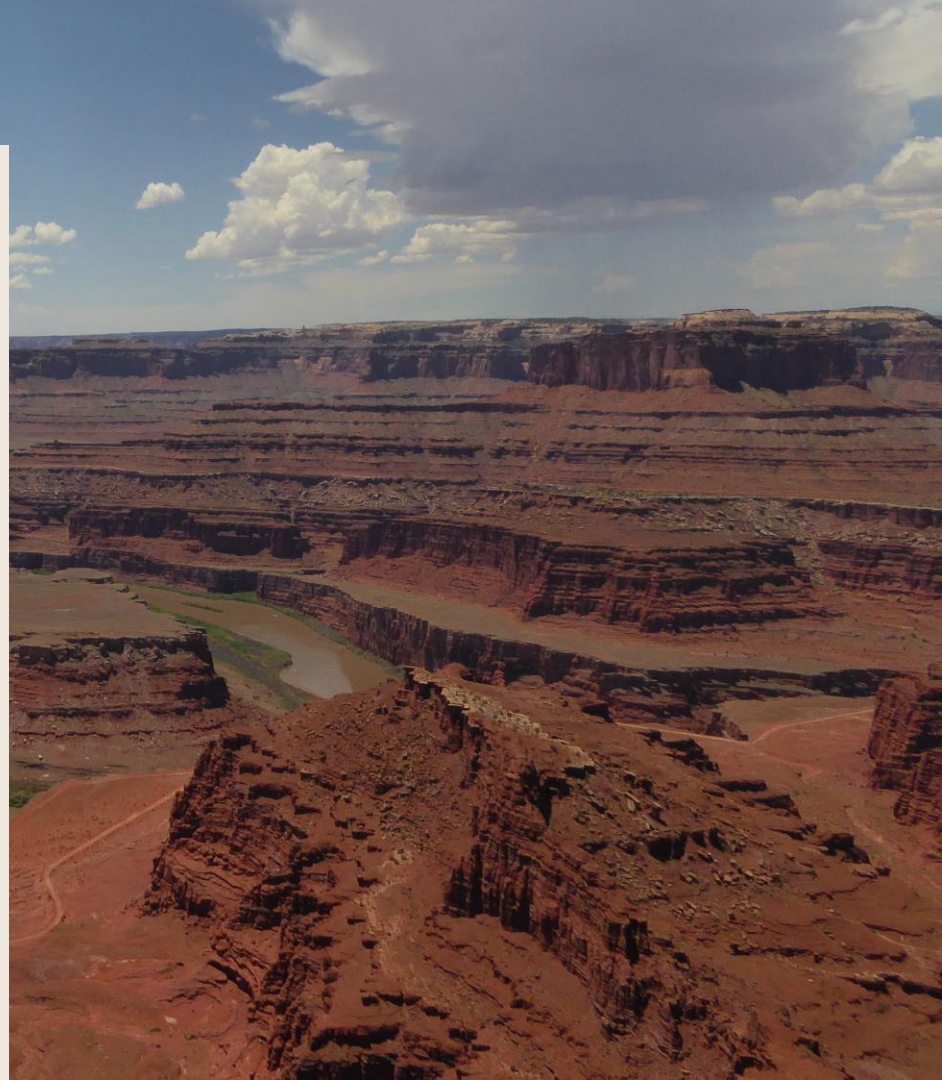
The level of information made available can vary:

- Names of reviewers
- Review reports
- Names and full review reports



Part 3: Understanding journal policies and requirements

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What are the journal's policies? Do they match your expectations and requirements, and those of your funder or employer?

- Do you agree to their conditions for publication?
- Do they offer open access (if you want/need this)?
- What are the copyright terms?
- Do they require you to make your data available?
- What are you allowed to do with your paper pre- and post-publication? (e.g. putting it in repositories)

Common policy requirements



- Research conduct and ethics
- Authorship
- Dual/redundant publication
- Copyright

You are likely to be asked to sign a declaration saying that you comply with all of the journal's policies

Research conduct and ethics

Ensure that you have followed international standards for scientific practice.

Journal Editors and reviewers will be looking for evidence of misconduct:

- **Fabrication** – invention of data
- **Falsification** – distortion of data or selective presentation of data; image manipulation
- **Prohibited research** – lack of research permits; failure to follow local laws; failure to follow animal protocols
- Failure to disclose **conflicts of interest**



Research conduct and ethics

You must include:

- Full details of your methodology and materials, so that someone could replicate your experiments
- Details of ethical approval or legal requirements for animal and human research (including permit numbers and details of informed consent)
- A disclosure of any conflicting or competing interests



Authorship

The *International Committee of Medical Journal Editors Guidelines* state that authors must meet these conditions:

- substantial contributions to conception and design, or acquisition of data, or analysis and interpretation of data;
- drafting the article or revising it critically for important intellectual content;
- final approval of the version to be published; and
- agreement to be accountable for all aspects of the work

**Note: journals won't
get involved in
authorship
disagreements**

Dual / redundant publication

It is usually not appropriate to submit your paper if it:

- is currently under consideration by another journal
- substantially overlaps a previously-published paper
- only presents a very small portion of a wider study (with other results in other papers)
- uses text or figures without appropriate accreditation (plagiarism/copyright infringement)



Many journals check papers against the published literature using plagiarism detection software

Copyright

All journals will ask you to agree to a copyright transfer or licence to publish.

Check that you are happy with the terms BEFORE submitting to the journal.

Remember to check that the licence complies with any rules from your institution or funder.

Be aware that the licence for open access publishing is different from non open access publication, and usually allows extensive reuse of your work.



AGREE

Open access



Many funders now require work to be open access.

- Is this available at your chosen journal?
- How much does it cost (and can you afford this? Are there waivers available if not?)?
- Are you happy with the licence terms?

Remember that open access usually doesn't just mean that your article will be free. It may allow others to use your work as they wish, and share it in whichever way they want to.

Gold open access - the final version of an article is freely and permanently accessible for everyone, immediately after publication. Copyright for the article is retained by the authors and most of the permission barriers are removed. Usually involves payment of a fee.

Green open access (or 'self-archiving') - the practice of placing a version of an author's manuscript into a repository, making it freely accessible for everyone. The version that can be deposited is dependent on the publisher's rules. Copyright and reuse is determined by the publisher and is more restricted than Gold OA.

Open data

Many journals now require, or encourage, data and other materials to be made publicly available.

Why should you do this?

- Preserve your scientific contributions
- Allow others to build on your work, find new uses for your data and use in meta-analyses (and reduce effort in data collection)
- Verification of results – readers can identify statistical or methodological errors
- It can increase citation levels



Preprints

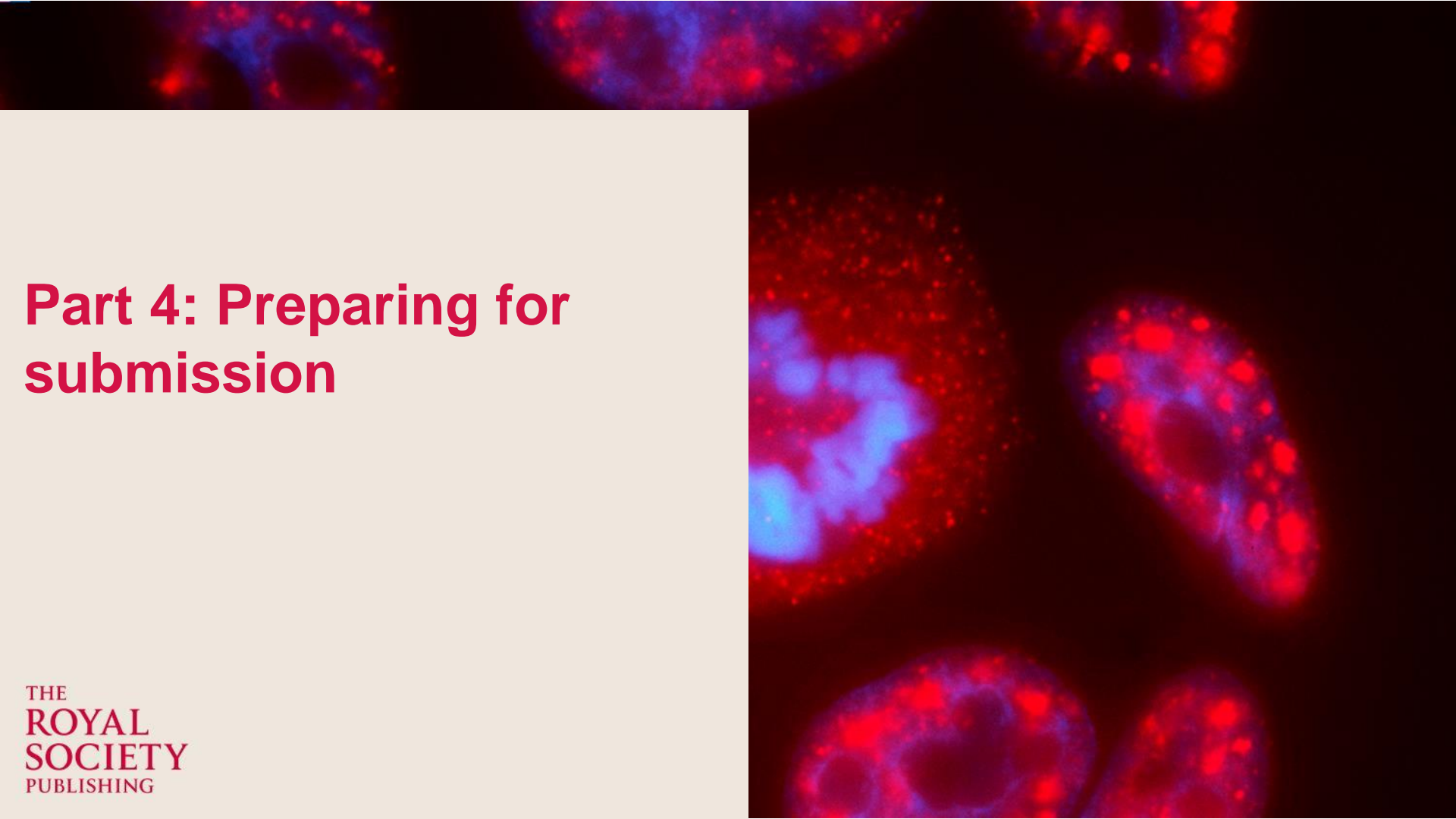
Putting your manuscript on a preprint server before formal submission can:

- increase visibility of your paper
- allow you to gather feedback from readers first

Check that your chosen journal allows submission of manuscripts that have previously appeared in a preprint server (Royal Society journals do).

You often can't put a later version on the preprint site (i.e. once it's been reviewed by the journal).





Part 4: Preparing for submission

Instructions for authors

Before submitting, read the journal's Instructions to Authors carefully.

Your paper may be delayed if you haven't included something or formatted the paper incorrectly.

Things to look out for are:

- Length limit
- Structure or formatting requirements
- Required additional information, e.g. conflict of interest, ethics, authorship, data accessibility, funding details, acknowledgements

You may need to have your paper language edited before submission.

Writing the paper

- Meet, discuss and formulate an important research question – write 2-3 extended abstracts to decide
- Tell your research as a compelling story – good research builds up a whole picture of a system
- Have a sound study design

Data should be central to everything done – your study is only as good as the data you have. If you don't have access to good data, collaborate with groups that do or use freely available datasets



Cover letter

The cover letter is an opportunity to highlight the importance and novelty of your paper, putting your work into context and highlighting why it is a valuable addition to the literature.

Keep the cover letter short, and don't include anything that is already in the paper.

Do include:

- Notes on anything that the Editor needs to be aware of (e.g. companion papers, any authorship issues, etc.)
- Justification for your choice of preferred or (particularly) non-preferred reviewers

Language

Writing a well written article is challenging even for native speakers

If you are struggling with it – invite a native speaker to be a co-author or pay for a professional language edit

Look at papers you enjoy and read and pay attention to the language and structure



Charlesworth
Author Services

Data archiving

- Have you included everything that might be useful to other researchers (including materials, code etc)?
- Is it prepared in a useful and clear to understand format?
- Have you taken into account any sensitive data, e.g. human subject data or the location of endangered species?
- Is it clear how readers of your paper can access your data set? Have you cited the location of your data set (if already available) within the manuscript text AND in the reference list?

Check the journal's policies about whether data must be available for review, or only on publication of the article. Contact the journal if you're unsure about what's required or appropriate for your research.

Data archiving

Examples of public archives:

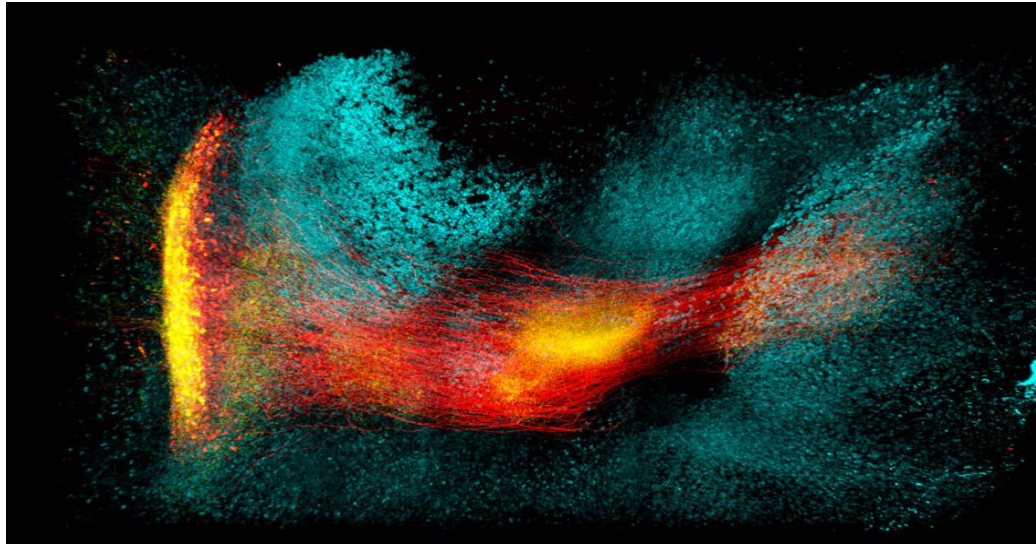
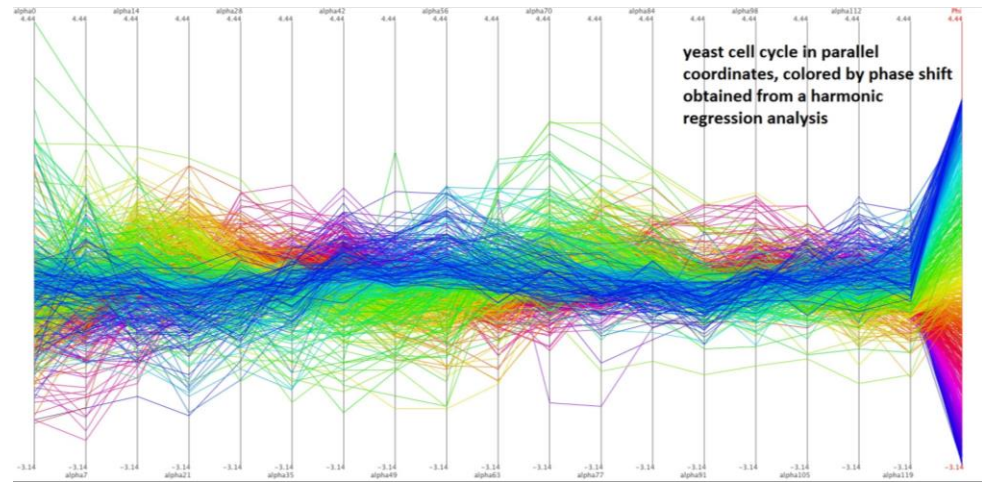
- Dryad
- GenBank
- TreeBASE
- Figshare
- Gene Expression Omnibus
- International Tree-Ring Data Bank
- Movebank
- Microreact

Many many others...



Presenting your data

The benefit of visualising data is that it allows people from many different fields to understand and interpret the findings



MIT researchers used their new tissue preservation technique to label and image neurons in a brain region called the globus pallidus externa. Neurons that express a protein called parvalbumin are labeled in red, and neurons labeled blue express a protein called GAD1.

Suggesting reviewers

Most journals will ask for suggestions of potential reviewers. The Editor may or may not use these. Suggesting good reviewers can help to speed up the peer review process.

When suggesting reviewers, ensure that they:

- Have knowledge specific to your manuscript
- Have a good publication record
- Are currently active
- Don't have a conflict of interest with you e.g. supervisor, collaborators

If your manuscript is interdisciplinary, suggest a reviewer from each area.

Have a strong title and abstract: it is the most important determinant of how many people will read it

Title

- Informative, relevant, short

Abstract

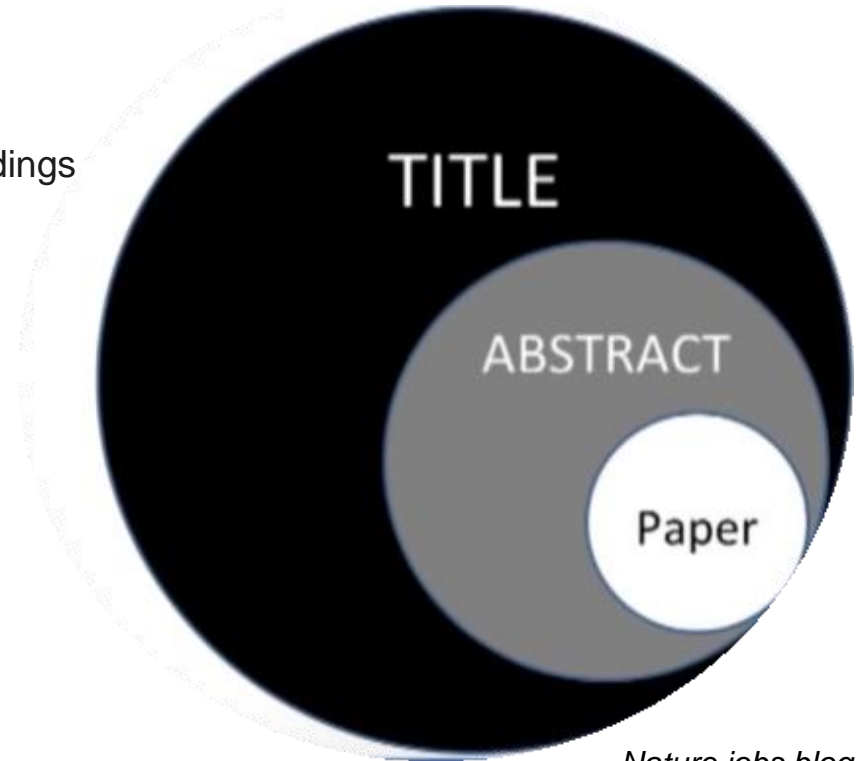
- Short summary of background, results and key findings
- Include key terms (helps with discoverability)
- Check the word count

Lay abstract

- Summary suitable for non-expert readers
- Avoid technical terms
- Put your work in a wider context

Keywords

- Include useful terms for searchability



Title

DO use - action verbs to make it lively

DON'T use - unnecessary details

- unknown abbreviations and jargon
- question marks, puns, metaphors, play on words (only review articles)



p53 shades of Hippo.

Review article

Furth N, et al. Cell Death Differ. 2018.

Authors

Furth N¹, Aylon Y¹, Oren M¹.

Abstract

Journal editors may only read the title and abstract to decide whether to reject or review

1. Why it was done and what is the problem being addressed?
2. What did you do?
3. What did you find out?
4. Conclusions?

Recipe for a good abstract:

Introduce topic, state problem, summarise findings, demonstrate broader implication or impact

Part 3: Enhancing the visibility your paper

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Search Engine Optimization

Title

Keep it short (around 15 words), clear and general

Key words

Include key words (or short key phrases) - think about what you would search for to find your paper.

Abstract

Include key-words and key phrases and repeat these 3–4 times throughout your abstract. It should emphasize what your research shows and how it helps to advance general ecological theory. Try to include these key-words/phases in the title too.

Promoting your paper online

- Tweet: short title + link + picture + @journal/institution/co-authors
- Facebook: good for longer content/linking out to content
- Blogs: offer to do a Q&A for your publisher
- Flag any photos / videos etc to your publisher and encourage them to use them
- Use your organisation's channels, e.g. website blog, newsletter
- Update your website



Press

- Journalists are mediators between scientists and the general public
- May be general or specialist reporters
- More likely to be interested if you have lots of photos, video, recordings, etc.
- Can be incredibly effective at getting your research read

The job of a journalist is to write a news story – not to promote your research

What makes a paper a good target for a press release?

- Novel
- General interest to the public
- Has a clear message
- Lots of pictures, audio or video
- Interesting methods
- Linked up with a particular event, anniversary etc.
- Open access



If you think your paper is suitable for a press-release...

- Ensure that your lay/media abstract is good and highlight's the paper's importance and public interest
- Talk to the publisher at an early stage about publication date/embargos
- Liaise with your university press team and the publisher's press team about who will do the press release
- Provide extra multimedia material if available

Final tips

- Respect embargo dates
- Be ready to respond to journalists immediately
- Cultivate a network of influencers (on Twitter, LinkedIn, etc.) BEFORE your work is published
- Help to promote other peoples' work – they then may return the favour
- Maintain a consistent message and stay true to the science and to what it means

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- Efficient and rapid processing
- Rigorous, constructive peer review
- Open access, open data, open peer review and Registered Reports available
- High production standards, with no charges for colour figures
- Options for research, reviews and theme issues
- Partnerships with Dryad, Figshare and Publons
- Wide international dissemination and extensive free access
- Articles promoted via the Royal Society Press Office
- 350 years of publishing experience
- Contribute to a charitable organisation that recognises, promotes, and supports excellence in science

Resources

- Think, check, submit <http://thinkchecksubmit.org>
- Directory of Open Access Journals <https://doaj.org>
- Sherpa Juliet (funders' open access requirements) <http://v2.sherpa.ac.uk/juliet>
- Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) <https://publicationethics.org>
- International Committee of Medical Journal Editors <http://www.icmje.org>
- Your university department or university Office of Research Integrity
- Peer review: The nuts and bolts (Sense about science)
<http://senseaboutscience.org/activities/peer-review-the-nuts-and-bolts/>
- Journal policies and instructions for authors (e.g.
<https://royalsociety.org/journals/authors/>)