Chapter 11
Manuscript Submission

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Gone are the days of printing and sending copies of a manuscript to a publisher via mail. Nearly all journals now rely exclusively on digital editorial management systems (Paltridge, 2020). The advent of online manuscript submission has arguably improved the process. Authors surveyed by Ware (2005) indicated experiencing digital submission as faster and more accessible than paper submission. Post-submission, authors can log into the editorial management system to check the status of submitted manuscripts, make revisions, and communicate with editorial staff. Other authors level criticisms against online submission systems, noting the time required to review submission instructions and to input material into fields as specified (Oh, 2020). This part of the process is presumably made more arduous by significant variations in manuscript requirements across journals, even among those of the same discipline (Jiang et al., 2019). Failure to attend to details for a given journal could mean immediate rejection of a manuscript (Welch, 2007), presumably necessitating resubmission (Oh, 2020). Fortunately, common errors in the submission process are easily avoidable with pre-planning, organization, and attention to detail.

In this chapter, we guide the reader step-by-step through preparing and submitting an academic manuscript for publication. We alert readers to common formatting and submission pitfalls that could result in manuscript rejection before review,

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illustrated with examples from leading social sciences journals.[1] We propose strategies to facilitate error-free manuscript submission. We support recommendations with journal editor commentaries, peer-reviewed publications, and references to relevant sections of the *American Psychological Association (APA) Publication Manual* (7th ed.).[2]

Preparing for the Submission Process

Journal submission processes share many commonalities. Perhaps due in part to the commonalities, authors often miss the subtle differences in requirements between journals. Attending to specific requirements when submitting to a journal is crucial. Kapp and Albertyn (2008) surveyed 73 editors for major journals in South Africa regarding errors authors make when submitting to a journal. Nearly all responding editors (94%) noted frequent failure to follow submission rules, despite 74% of the associated journals providing author guidance on their journal page.

Orienting to the Process

Take time to become familiar with the journal's instructions for authors. Then, orient to the manuscript submission system. Note any information you will need to gather and forms you must prepare. Determine which formatting requirements apply to your paper and how manuscript components will be organized for submission. Some journals (e.g., *Journal of Contextual Behavioral Science*) offer a submission checklist to assist authors with the submission process. If a checklist is not provided, we strongly recommend creating your own. As you review the author instructions and submission portal, align your checklist with journal criteria.

Author Instructions Pages

Access instructions for submitting a manuscript through the journal's homepage. Look for an area on the page labeled as author instructions, guidelines for submission, or something similar. Alternatively, this information might be found via a tab

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[1] Information is current as of the time this chapter was written but may change over time. We advise readers to reference journal pages for the most current information.

[2] There are four primary academic writing styles. Chicago/Turabian style is used in Business, History, and the Fine Arts. Journals targeting humanity, literature, and language use Modern Language Association (MLA) standards. Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) standards apply to publications focused on biotechnology and computing. Education and Social Science disciplines follow standards established by the American Psychological Association (APA).

or a menu. For the *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis (JABA)*, author guidelines for submission are a drop-down menu option under the tab "contribute". Consider printing out author instructions for easy reference during the submission process. The *Journal of Contextual Behavioral Science* provides author instructions in .pdf format.

Journals offer various tools to assist authors through the submission process. The journal may provide a FAQ for authors. Video tutorials may be available (Johnson & Green, 2009). When reviewing instructions, follow any relevant links to additional information. For example, author instructions for *American Psychologist* include links to information specific to journal reporting standards and ethical standards and to forms that must accompany submissions. The scope and detail of the instructions for authors vary widely across journals. Note any aspects of the instructions that are unclear or ambiguous. Hartley and Cabanac (2017) caution attention to words like "appropriate" that might not sufficiently describe what is expected or allowed. When in doubt, contact the journal editorial staff for clarification.

Submission Portal

Access the journal submission portal via a clickable "Submit" link on the journal's homepage. The link will take you to a manuscript submission and publication system. Upon accessing the submission portal, you will be prompted through creating an account. Check your email for a registration verification link. Follow the email instructions to confirm registration. Save your username and password in a safe location. You will use this information when logging into the system to check manuscript status, manage revisions, and communicate with editorial staff. To facilitate interface and communication, add the editorial program site to your pop-up blocker exceptions and set permissions to allow emails from the system.

Two major online manuscript submission systems are *ScholarOne* (clarivate. com) and *Editorial Manager* (www.ariessys.com). ScholarOne hosts prestigious journals, including *Psychological Science, Behavior Modification, JABA,* and *Journal of the Experimental Analysis of Behavior (JEAB).* Editorial Manager services all journals published by the American Psychological Association (APA) (e.g., *American Psychologist, Behavioral* and *Brain Sciences*). In addition, several flagship behavior analytic journals use Editorial Manager (e.g., *Analysis of Verbal Behavior, Perspectives on Behavioral Science, Behavior Analysis in Practice, The Psychological Record*). You may encounter other systems as well. For instance, *American Journal of Psychology* and *Journal for Advancing Sport Psychology in Research* use the *Scholastica* platform (https://scholasticahq.com).

Navigate through the submission portal to become familiar with the system format and workflow. Printable user's guides are available for ScholarOne (https://clarivate.com/webofsciencegroup/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/dlm_uploads/2019/10/ScholarOne-Manuscripts-Author-Guide.pdf) and for Editorial Manager (https://www.ariessys.com/wp-content/uploads/EM-Author-English.pdf). A web-based user's guide is available for Scholastica (https://help.scholasticahq.

com/article/72-author-guide). ScholarOne and Editorial Manager are largely similar in their author-related features (Kim et al., 2018). Procedures and requirements for submission do vary between the editorial management systems and within the systems across journals.

As you orient yourself to the journal home page and the manuscript submission system, continue to update your submission checklist. List all components of the submission in the order they will be included in the submission. Note whether each component will be uploaded as a document or entered into a field within the submission form. Highlight page limits and formatting requirements as they pertain to sections of your manuscript. Also, list any steps you intend to take before beginning the submission process (e.g., exploring data sharing options, running error checks). It is helpful, for instance, to identify what information will be needed and to collect these data before initiating the submission process.

Gathering Collateral Information

You will provide specific collateral data during the submission process. Where the system requires data before advancing to the next step, having information handy expedites submission. Collecting information ahead of time also helps to mitigate the impact of any related delays. For instance, you may experience delays in accessing information from other sources (e.g., co-authors, institutions). In gathering information, you may identify additional pre-submission tasks that could increase the likelihood of your manuscript ultimately being accepted for publication (e.g., registering the study protocol or data set). Begin collecting information now. You can use any delays in accessing information to attend to manuscript formatting.

Authorship

Take time before initiating your submission to clarify authorship and to collect information relevant to authorship. As the submitting author, you will provide names and contact information for all contributing authors. You will also identify each author's role in the study according to authorship conventions. Standards for establishing and validating author contributions vary across journals. Failure to adhere to authorship standards could result in submission rejection.

Named Authors

Each author named on your submission must be a significant contributor to the project. Named authors are those who have (1) contributed substantially to study design or acquisition, analysis, or interpretation of the data; (2) drafted or critically

revised the manuscript; (3) given final approval for publication; and (4) agreed to be responsible and accountable for the accuracy and integrity of the work (ICMJE, n.d.). The Contributor Roles Taxonomy, or CRediT (https://credit.niso.org), can be used to identify contributors meeting criteria for authorship and to describe each author's contribution. Contributors who do not meet criteria for authorship should be acknowledged elsewhere. Be prepared to state and describe each named author's role in the study. Some journals (e.g., *Psychological Science*) publish this information in the article.

Order of Authors

Determine the order in which author names should appear on the paper. Authors are generally listed on the title page in order of the magnitude of their contribution to the project, with the person who conducted the primary research listed first. For works with co-authors, Teixeira da Silva (2021) suggests adding the designation co- before each equally contributing author. Alternatively, distinguish co-authors from other authors with bold typeface.

Author Information

For each author, be prepared to provide their preferred full name and highest degree earned. Some journals (e.g., *JABA, JEAB*) invite authors to include their preferred pronouns. Each author should provide you with an email address at which they will receive correspondence related to the submission. Additionally, you will need the name of each author's affiliation, the department they belong to, and the complete address of the institution. For authors in private practice, you will provide their geographic location.

Corresponding Author Identify one author to serve as the corresponding author. The corresponding author will manage all communication between the journal and all authors of the manuscript.

ORCID ID Collect each author's ORCID ID. The *Open Researcher and Contributor Identifier (ORCID)* ID is a 16-digit alphanumeric code unique to each researcher (https://orcid.org). An ORCID ID connects authors with their prior research and other biographic information. Some journals (e.g., *Behavior Modification* and *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*) require an ORCID ID for each contributing author. Other journals encourage an ORCID ID but do not require it. Authors who do not have an ORCID ID might consider registering for one before the manuscript is submitted.

Author Biographies Some journals request or require a biography for each named author. Biographies should highlight experience, credentials, and achievements related to the article topic. Attend to journal-specific word count limits, which may range from a maximum of 50 words to a maximum of 200 words per biography.

Study Registration

Gather information related to study pre-registration. Pre-registration is usually not mandatory, but it is encouraged. Pre-registration promotes rigor in experimental procedure and data analysis. Pre-registration also facilitates collaboration and replication (Johnson, 2005) and reduces the odds of duplication in research. If you pre-registered your study, confirm that you have included pre-registration information (site and registration number) in the methods section of your manuscript. Add this information to the author note on your title page (American Psychological Association, 2020, Section 3.9). You may also be asked to provide a pre-registration number within the submission form.

Registering your study prior to initiating research protocols is ideal. However, studies can be registered on clinicaltrials.gov at any time, even after the study has concluded (Clinicaltrials.gov). There are several sites on which to register a study. For example, Clinicaltrials.gov is a website that stores and allows access to information on various clinical studies. PROSPERO (https://www.crd.york.ac.uk/prospero/) is a site where an author can register a systematic review. If you did not pre-register your study or registered after the fact, indicate this in your cover letter.

Data Sharing

If your manuscript includes new data, confirm that the data sharing policy for your selected journal aligns with your project. Data sharing refers to providing other researchers with access to data resources. Data sharing policies promote transparency in research. Further, data sharing contributes to knowledge by facilitating replication and extension and empowering cross-disciplinary collaboration (Alter & Gonzalez, 2018). The FAIR Guiding Principles for scientific data management and stewardship (Wilkinson et al., 2016) call for research data to be findable, accessible, interoperable, and reusable (FAIR). Journals adopt data sharing policies in accordance. Find details on the FAIR data principles at Go Fair (https://www.go-fair.org/fair-principles/).

Levels of Data Sharing

Most journals subscribe to a hierarchy of data sharing requirements. For example, journals published by *Springer Nature* (https://www.springernature.com/gp/authors/research-data-policy/research-data-policy-types) apply one of four levels of data sharing: Type 1 policy encourages data sharing and citation, Type 2 encourages data sharing and evidence of data sharing, Type 3 encourages data sharing and requires a statement of data availability, and Type 4 requires evidence of data sharing and peer review. *Behavior Analysis in Practice*, *JABA,* and *The Psychological Record* are examples of journals that apply a Type 3 research data policy. Journals published by *Sage* follow a three-tier data sharing policy (https://us.sagepub.com/en-us/nam/research-data-sharing-policies). At Tier 1, data sharing, citing, and linking are encouraged. Tier 2 mandates data sharing, citing, and linking. At Tier 3, peer-reviewed data verification is required. The stringency of data sharing policies ranges across journals. Crosas et al. (2018) assessed public websites for 291 highly ranked social science journals. Across psychology journals reviewed, 60% posted a data sharing policy, with 22% of the policies requiring data sharing.

Considerations Related to Data Sharing

The often-personal characteristics of social science research topics may inhibit data sharing. Researchers express concerns that shared data might be used outside of intended parameters, or that data sharing might contribute to the reidentification of confidential information. Jeng et al. (2016) evaluated data sharing behavior using a profiling instrument. Of those profiled, 85% agreed that data sharing benefits collaboration in research. However, many were reluctant to share data.

Data Sharing with Qualitative Research   Data sharing may be of particular concern for qualitative researchers. Qualitative data collection differs fundamentally from quantitative data collection (Tsai et al., 2016). Qualitative data are non-numerical data used to approximate or characterize information that is not easily counted. Qualitative data include focus group responses, direct observations or interviews, and audio or video recordings. The nature of qualitative data may increase the risk of reidentification (Tsai et al., 2016). Further, even with interview scripts and operationally defined coding procedures, there are concerns about fidelity in replication or analysis of qualitative data (Tsai et al., 2016).

Apprehensions notwithstanding, Tsai et al. (2016) suggests that data sharing might increase confidence in qualitative research. A small percentage of journals evaluated by Crosas et al. (2018) explicitly noted qualitative data in their data policies. Authors of qualitative studies might consider choosing such a journal. Journals with policies specific to qualitative data are more likely to support verifiable, reproducible, and safe qualitative data sharing (Crosas et al., 2018; Tsai et al., 2016).

Data Sharing and Study Approval

You should find the data sharing policy for a selected journal posted on, or accessible through, the author instructions pages. Confirm that the terms of your study approval align with the journal's data sharing policy. Data associated with a manuscript must be managed in accordance with the research protocol, the terms of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval, and the language of the informed consent (Meyer, 2018). Deviations may require that you request a change of protocol through the IRB.

In considering whether to share data and to what level, weigh potential risks to research participants as well as permissions granted. Ethical considerations will vary depending, in part, on whether participant consent forms address or omit the mention of data sharing (Meyer, 2018). If you determine that sharing your data in part or in full is not appropriate, state this in your Data Availability Statement (see below) and include a detailed rationale in your cover letter. Notably, most researchers profiled by Jeng et al. (2016) judged their research data wholly or mostly sharable. Only 5% said their data was not sharable. The authors found no significant difference in data sharing profiles across qualitative and quantitative researchers.

Data Repositories

If you have opted to post your study data to a data repository, include the name of the repository and the citation for your data set with your manuscript submission. A data repository is a sustainable virtual warehouse that maintains and distributes data used in scholarly work. Although journals do not typically require data sharing through a repository, it is strongly encouraged. Data repositories promote FAIR data sharing (Crosas et al., 2018). Repository-held data sets are assigned a DOI, making the data citable and discoverable. Further, data repositories curate data to ensure it is usable over time and across technological changes (Alter & Gonzalez, 2018).

If you have not posted your data to a repository, and doing so is within the parameters of your approval/consent, consider sharing your data to a data repository before submitting for publication. The National Institute of Health (sharing.nih. gov) offers guidelines on selecting an appropriate data repository. Consider long-term sustainability, confidentiality, curation, and quality assurance. Alter and Gonzalez (2018) recommends that authors use a domain-specific data repository. While general and institutional repositories have a broader range, domain-specific repositories focus on limited data and are more likely to offer curation. The Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR) is an example of a domain-specific repository. It hosts 21 specialized topic collections within the social and behavioral sciences (icpsr.umich.edu). Qualitative researchers might consider the Qualitative Data Repository (https://qdr.syr.edu/).

Formatting for Submission

Confirm that you have formatted your manuscript according to journal requirements. Editors endorse incorrect style and language as the category of author error most often noted in submitted manuscripts (Kapp & Albertyn, 2008). These errors are easily avoidable with close attention to detail. Review journal instructions carefully. While most social science journals advise authors to follow APA formatting guidelines, journal instructions do not always align with APA standards. Make notes on journal instructions pertaining to style and language in the corresponding sections of your checklist. Check for formatting resources provided by the journal. For example, some journals offer templates. Consider downloading a similar paper from the journal as a sample for reference (Hartley & Cabanac, 2017). Journal editors and editorial staff (Johnson & Green, 2009; Welch, 2007) alert authors to areas in which formatting errors are common. We discuss how to recognize and surmount those potential trouble spots below.

Type of Paper

Determine what type of manuscript you are submitting. The requirements and standards applied to a manuscript (i.e., formatting, components, standards for reporting or data sharing) can differ depending on the article type. As such, the submission portal may require you to select the category that best applies to your paper. Journals typically publish multiple article types, including original research, case studies, opinion papers, and editorials. To determine which category best suits your manuscript, check the journal's author instruction pages for category parameters and examples.

Word Counts and Page Limits

Confirm your manuscript complies with journal page or word count limits. Journals control the length of submissions by establishing such limits. Limits keep authors focused and concise and allow journals to maximize the number of papers they can include in an issue. Not attending to established limits is a primary reason for the immediate rejection of a manuscript (Welch, 2007). Journals vary in how word counts or page limits are applied.

Application of Word Count and Page Limits

Limitations may differ based on the type of paper you are submitting. For example, *Psychological Science* limits commentaries to 1000 words (including main text, notes, acknowledgments, and appendices) but accepts research articles of longer lengths. *Journal of Contextual Behavioral Science* accepts review articles of up to 10,000 words, but the journal caps empirical, conceptual, and practical application papers at 6000 words.

Check journal standards to determine which manuscript sections are included in word and page counts. A journal might apply limits to the body of the manuscript only. For example, *Psychological Methods* accepts manuscripts of 12,000 words, excluding references, tables, figures, and appendices. *American Psychologist,* on the other hand, includes the title page, abstract, references, tables, and figures in their 35 double-spaced page limit. The 6000-word limit imposed by the *Journal of Contextual Behavioral Science* includes the abstract but does not include references, tables, or figures.

Journals might differentially apply word count limits across sections of a manuscript. For example, *JABA*'s 3000-word limit applies only to the Introduction and Discussion sections of the manuscript. *Psychological Science* does not place a limit on the length of the Method or Results sections. However, the word count must not exceed 2000 across the Introduction, Discussion, footnotes, acknowledgments, and appendices. Some journals (*American Psychologist, Psychological Methods*) will make exceptions to page limits when the topic or the study format justifies additional pages (e.g., multiple studies or phases) and the article makes an exceptional contribution to the literature. *American Psychologist* requires that the author submit a request to the editor for additional page space prior to submission.

General Formatting Guidelines

Format your manuscript according to the standards indicated by the journal. When reviewing journal formatting standards, it is helpful to have a copy of the APA publication manual handy for reference. Be sure you are working with the most recent version (e.g., APA 7th Edition). As noted previously, there may be discrepancies between formatting instructions provided by a journal and APA standards. For example, the APA Publication Manual (2020) permits up to five levels of headings (Section 2.27), but *Analysis of Verbal Behavior* will accommodate no more than three heading levels. Discrepancies may also present when author instructions need to be updated. When in doubt, contact the journal to confirm formatting standards. Doing so could ultimately save you time.

Language and Tone

Confirm that your manuscript's language and tone align with journal requirements. The language standard for academic writing is English for Research Publication Purposes (ERPP). Applying standard language to academic writing promotes global dissemination of knowledge (Flowerdew, 2015). However, an ERPP standard may put international scholars at a distinct disadvantage. Journals can be inflexible in accepting variants of English (McKinley & Rose, 2018), presenting a bias against English speakers of other languages. Submission systems that rely on artificial intelligence may be exceptionally resistant to variations.

Format-free submission processes (Ganz et al., 2022) may benefit English speakers of other languages. In addition, as part of their commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI), many author instructions pages now include a link to access editing services specific to academic writing and English language editing. There is typically a cost for these services. However, authors may be eligible for a discount with some vendors. For instance, authors attempting to publish in an APA journal can access discounted editing services (https://www.apa.org/pubs/journals/resources/editing-services).

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Language

Authors have a role in promoting DEI in academic publishing as well. Ensure you have written your manuscript in language that is inclusive and bias-free. For example, replace any gendered terms with gender-neutral variants (i.e., supplant she/he with they/them). The APA Publication Guide (2020) offers general and topic-specific guidelines for reducing bias in writing (Sections 5.1–5.10). DEI issues in academia perpetuate systemic oppression. Conversely, publications that promote bias-free and inclusive language benefit the scientific community by increasing contributions from otherwise underrepresented groups (Dewidar et al., 2022).

Text Formatting

Confirm that you have formatted text according to the requirements of the journal. Most journals require documents written in Microsoft Word (.doc or .docx). LaTeX (.tex) may be used if the manuscript includes mathematical content. Construct equations using software like MathType (https://www.wiris.com/en/mathtype/) or Equation Editor 3.0, a component included in some versions of Microsoft Word. Additional text formatting guidelines may specify font or font size (e.g., 10- or 12-point Times New Roman). Bolding and italics are typically acceptable for adding emphasis, but other text effects may not be permitted. Other specifications may include using the tab function to indent rather than the space bar and avoiding using

field functions. Unless a journal states otherwise, the text should be double-spaced with standard margins of one inch on all sides. Maintain formatting design consistency across the document, including in tables and figures. Ensure that you have disabled macros and protections in Word.

Footnotes

Journals may have special instructions for authors using footnotes. Generally, footnotes are used to give additional information or to indicate copyright attributions. Not all journals allow footnoting. *JEAB*, for instance, permits footnoting only when they are essential. Journals that allow footnotes might specify how to include them (e.g., within the body of the manuscript, on a separate page). Authors submitting to *Psychological Methods* should add footnotes to the acknowledgments page.

Manuscript Components

Ensure your manuscript is clearly written and easy to follow. While many errors are amenable to correction during the review process, it is "vital" that authors submit a well-crafted, well-written manuscript (Bordage, 2001, p. 893). The *Journal Article Reporting Standards (JARS)* are guidelines for journal article content formulated by the APA (https://apastyle.apa.org/jars). JARS standards promote transparency and methodological integrity in research. There are JARS standards for quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods studies. See the APA Style JARS website (https://apastyle.apa.org/jars) for in-depth information on the etiology and application of JARS. Chapter 3 of the APA Publication Manual (7th ed.) provides an overview of JARS. We discuss JARS here in terms of common formatting errors leading to manuscript rejection prior to review.

Title Page

The title of your article should concisely capture the theme of the paper and convey the study design and aim (Bordage, 2001; Johnson & Green, 2009). Prepare your title page according to APA standards and in line with journal specifications. Some journals may limit title length. JABA, for example, limits a title to 12 words or fewer. The running head, a shortened version of the article title, should be included at the top of the title page and all manuscript pages. See the APA Publication Guide (2020, Section 2.3).

Authors

List all study authors in order of their contribution to the project. Include each author's academic or non-academic affiliation (e.g., hospital, laboratory, other organization). For authors in private practice, state their geographic location.

Author Note

Organize the author note into paragraphs, each pertaining to a required information set (See APA Publication Manual, 2020, Section 2.7). The information included in the author's note varies across journals. We describe prevailing standards below.

Author Information For each author, provide full name, complete mailing address, email address, and ORCID ID (if applicable). Identify the corresponding author clearly. When requested, include each author's contribution to the study.

Disclosures State potential conflicts of interest or indicate that no conflicts exist. List funding sources and grant support. For each contributor, specify the nature of the support. Include grant numbers where applicable. Include study registration information if applicable. If study data are shared openly, include the citation for the data set.

Acknowledgments Acknowledge people who contributed to the study but did not meet criteria for authorship. Also include those who provided general support or technical assistance. Each acknowledgment should include the person or entity's name and their specific function or contribution. Clever (1997) advises authors to solicit consent from anyone they intend to name in the acknowledgments.

Abstract

Confirm your abstract meets the requirements for your selected journal. The purpose of the abstract is to provide a brief summary of the manuscript content. Some journals require structured abstracts, while others require an unstructured, paragraph-style abstract. The APA Publication Manual (2020, Section 3.3) describes JARS standards for abstracts. In general, abstracts should include background, purpose, research design and method, and conclusions (Hartley & Cabanac, 2017; Mosteller et al., 2004). Depending on the type of article, the abstract may also include information on the setting or population, the intervention, data analysis, and findings (Mosteller et al., 2004). A journal may specify additional required content. Most journals limit the length of the abstract to 150–250 words.

In some cases, journals require more than one abstract. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, for instance, asks for an abstract of 250 words or less and a shorter abstract

of no more than 100 words. *Psychological Methods* requires a technical abstract at submission and a second non-technical, translational abstract with first revisions. Some journals offer authors the option to include a visual (Paltridge, 2020) or video abstract. Depending on the submission system, you will either upload the abstract as a separate document or cut and paste the abstract into a field within the submission form.

Keywords

Identify keywords or short phrases that represent your study or article according to journal parameters. Keywords are terms indicative of central topics, research themes, or discussion points in your manuscript. Publishers use these terms for indexing or cross-indexing your work. Some journals structure keywords, requiring the author to select a specific number of applicable words from a standard list. Alternatively, the author may be permitted to submit 3–10 words or short phrases of their choosing. Consider referencing a subject index when choosing keywords. APA, for example, offers a *Thesaurus of Psychological Index Terms* (www.apa.org). Johnson and Green (2009) caution against using terms taken from the common vernacular, which may convey meaning other than what a researcher intends.

During submission, you will either select keywords from a list of options or enter terms into a field within the submission form. Some journals require the author to submit keywords on the abstract or the title page. Check author instructions for other journal-specific requirements. For example, *JEAB* advises authors to list keywords in descending order of importance.

Introduction

Journals may reject manuscripts at submission if the introduction is too long or does not include clearly stated hypotheses (Johnson & Green, 2009). As per JARS, your introduction should frame your study by stating the importance of the problem and related implications. It should include a review of relevant literature, noting gaps to be addressed by your study. The introduction should conclude by stating the aim of the study and the research hypotheses. According to Johnson and Green (2009), three to four paragraphs should be sufficient to provide study context and related theories and to state the study aims and hypotheses.

Methods Section

Inadequacies in a manuscript's Methods section might also result in rejection before review. Common inadequacies include insufficient detail, inappropriate statistical analyses, and failure to note relevant approvals (Johnson & Green, 2009). Ensure your methods section provides sufficient information to facilitate study replication (See Jars, Method). Reference within the Methods section any supplementary materials that would support replication (e.g., extended scripts, surveys, visuals). Provide a clear, concise rationale for your chosen statistical approach. Consider consulting with a statistician as necessary. Include specific information related to study registration (i.e., registration number and the site registered with) and ethical approvals (e.g., IRB affiliation). Clearly state that research was conducted within the parameters of registered study protocols and ethical approvals.

Results Section

Common errors in the Results sections include unnecessary information or commentary (Johnson & Green, 2009) and incomplete reporting of statistical analyses (Giofrè et al., 2017; Johnson & Green, 2009). Reference JARS standards appropriate for your research design (i.e., quantitative, qualitative, mixed methods) to ensure your Results section includes all necessary components. Reserve commentary for the Discussion section. Review journal standards for reporting statistical findings. Failure to adhere to requirements will likely result in the rejection of your manuscript.

Standards for Reporting Statistical Findings

Confirm that you have reported findings according to journal standards. Many journals now require or strongly encourage authors to report new statistics (Giofrè et al., 2017). Increased standards include exact reporting of statistical findings. For example, when indicating statistical significance, a journal may require exact p values (e.g., $p < 0.0232$) rather than estimates ($p < 0.05$). Researchers should support p values with confidence intervals (e.g., 95% CI [3.27, 6.34]. Other features of new statistical reporting include indicating how the sample size was determined and what criteria were applied to include and exclude subjects from the sample. Researchers are also encouraged to conduct and report a meta-analysis of related results.

Typographical Errors in Statistical Reporting   Typographical errors in reporting statistics may result in rejection prior to review. Some journals evaluate submissions using StatCheck (https://mbnuijten.com/statcheck/), an R program that assesses

statistics for typographical errors. Manuscripts with errors will not progress to the review stage. *Psychological Science* recommends that authors run StatCheck or a similar program before submitting so that any typographical errors in statistics can be detected and corrected before review.

Tables and Figures

Tables and figures can enhance the readability and clarity of your manuscript. However, an unnecessary or poorly formatted table or figure could result in the rejection of your manuscript. Reference the Table Checklist (Section 7.20) and the Figure Checklist (Section 7.35) in APA Publication Manual (2020) for standards in formatting. Attend closely to journal-specific criteria for tables and figures as well.

Including Tables or Figures

Include a table or graph in your manuscript if the visual conveys the information more clearly and concisely than the text. If the information can be clearly presented in the text, *JABA* editors advise leaving it in the text. Reference any tables or figures in the body of the manuscript but avoid redundancy. Refrain from explaining in the text what you have depicted in the table or figure (Johnson & Green, 2009).

Formatting Tables and Figures

Journals habitually reject manuscripts that include figures with poor resolution, incorrect formatting, or missing legends or captions (Johnson & Green, 2009; Welch, 2007). Therefore, attend closely to formatting instructions for your selected journal. While text and style conventions for the manuscript body typically apply to tables and figures, there are likely to be exceptions.

Tables   Create tables using the table function in Microsoft Word rather than importing a spreadsheet. Use borders or lines only where necessary for clarity. Do not use shading. Number your tables using sequential Arabic numerals. Cite tables within the text consistent with the numerical order of the table.

Figures   Figures follow similar guidelines regarding numbering and sequential display within the text. Figures embedded into the text should be manipulatable. The journal may ask for editable files. When applicable, note which graphics program you used to create an image. Check journal policies on figure hue. Journals may publish figures in color online, but they typically print figures in black and white. Some journals allow authors to have a figure printed in color for a fee. *Psychological*

Methods, for example, charges the author $900 for an initial color image, with subsequent images printed in color at reduced rates. In lieu of color printing, Johnson and Green (2009) advise creating figures using symbols to maximize readability.

Confirm that your figures are of sufficient resolution for printing. Line art should generally be 900–1200 DPI, and images should be at least 300 DPI for color or 600 DPI for black and white. Journals may give instructions for specific types of figures. For example, *JABA* and *JEAB* specify criteria for line graphs, including standards for data points, axes, and lines. *Psychological Methods* specifies line weight based on the program used to create the image.

Submitting Tables and Figures

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Your discussion should address whether your study results support your hypotheses. Include an interpretation of your results in light of the relevant literature, accounting for potential sources of bias. Remove any commentary not supported by your research or the related body of literature.

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Scientists are ethically obligated to indicate any weaknesses in their research that might have influenced outcomes or conclusions. However, authors commonly err by failing to sufficiently consider and describe limitations (Johnson & Green, 2009). Ross and Bibler Zaidi (2019) provide a framework for considering study limitations. They recommend evaluating your study in terms of study design, data collection, data analyses, and threats to internal validity (e.g., attrition, maturation) and external validity (e.g., generalizability). For each potential limitation, describe contributing factors, explain the implications, and detail your efforts to minimize the effects of each limitation. When applicable, suggest alternative interpretations of and explanations for your results. All studies have limitations. Do not leave the task of identifying limitations to peer reviewers (Greener, 2018; Ross & Bibler Zaidi, 2019). Reviewers favor manuscripts that interpret results with regard for study limitations (Bordage, 2001; Ross & Bibler Zaidi, 2019). Doing so demonstrates rigor and transparency (Greener, 2018). A discussion of study limitations should segue into considerations for future research. Johnson and Green (2009) advise authors to go beyond stating the need for more research by offering considered strategies for extending research. For example, authors could suggest alternative approaches that might mitigate the effects of limitations in future studies.

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Conclusion

For better or worse, the widespread adoption of digital editorial management systems has changed the manuscript submission process. Critics argue that rigidity within digital systems and variation across systems increase the likelihood of a manuscript being rejected prior to review. With proper preparation, authors are likely to find digital editorial management systems facilitate and streamline the manuscript submission process. Avoid common submission errors with pre-planning, organization, and attention to detail. Prepare by reviewing author resources specific to your selected journal and to the digital editorial system used by that journal. Use these resources to create a submission checklist. Note journal-specific formatting requirements and limitations on manuscript length. Confirm you have reported results consistent with journal standards (e.g., new statistics). Check journal guidelines for tables, figures, and supplementary materials. Ensure all required disclosures and attestations are included in your submission. Prepare a cover letter to convey essential information related to your submission. State your manuscript's unique contribution to the literature and highlight how it fits with the mission and values of the selected journal. Describe any potential conflicts or issues of concern.

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