Success in Publishing: navigating the process

• Part I: the writing process: Nancy Riggs

• Part II: submission and review – what comes next: Robinson Cecil

• the rules 😊
  • stop us any time with questions – but try to make them “global”
  • it may be disruptive to come and go – be conscious of people around you
Part I: Before you begin and as you writing

- A few things to think about before you start
- Some best practices in constructing a manuscript

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But first:

• how many of you have written a manuscript already?
• how many have submitted a manuscript?
From the beginning

• You’re finishing up your research and thrilled about your results
• You have a novel idea that apparently hasn’t been discussed before
• You have an enormous pile of maps/seismic/analyses/video footage/remote imagery and synthesis

IT’S TIME TO WRITE THAT PAPER!
From the beginning

• Audience!
  • choose the most appropriate journal – think about your primary idea
  • check the website for each journal
• Think about who your co-authors should be (if any)
• Refine the topic
• WRITE!
Audience: use the journal
Audience: use the journal

• Model how you construct the manuscript on a published paper (structure, formatting, diagrams, tables, etc.)
A caveat about journals and choice

• “Predatory journals”
  • flashy emails promising the world
  • “your colleagues will all see your work”
  • ask around – ask colleagues/mentors
Audience

• keep in mind that if you are writing for a “general” journal, you must assume relatively little inferred knowledge (your reader knows much less about your topic than you do...)
Who are your co-authors?

• Everyone who had a substantial contribution in framing the problem and its resolution.
  • all authors must contribute to writing the paper, whether literally or through ideas
  • many journals require confirmation

• When in doubt, consult your dissertation / thesis / post-doc supervisor
What is important?

• Most ideas have value
• Frame your idea in a way that your officemate / partner / colleague can see its value: why would someone read about this?
Write!

• Hourglass structure
• IMRAD (Introduction, Methods, Results, and Discussion)
  • what parts of the paper will deliver the greatest impact of your work?
  • the wider parts are not more important, but are broader (bigger ideas)
Hourglass structure: IMRAD

**Introduction**

**BIG concepts & context**

**findings (Methods, data, Results, comparisons...)**

**Discussion**

the ‘meat’: quite specific to your study

relevance, synthesis, implications, predictions — more broad context

% impact
Write!

• Think very seriously about writing an outline first...
• Make a list of likely figures and insert them in the outline
• Are you writing a paper from your thesis/dissertation (the „Q“ in following slides)?
Write the Introduction

• Follow the scientific method
  • what is known
  • what is not known / poorly understood / contradictory to the previous ideas: What is the problem you are addressing?

• ”Q” – cut the text as much as possible – be focused on most important points
Write the Introduction

• Follow the scientific method
  • why you used the method / field site / images you did – how it/they are THE way to solve the problem
  • a bit about your conclusions
  • SET THE STAGE for the paper

• Some people write the Introduction last
The other parts

• Methods
  • sufficiently descriptive that they can be replicated
  • (“Q” – what was important for the thesis, what were “common” methods)

• Data (results):
  • all your results whether they support your ideas or not
  • no bias, no interpretation at this point
  • “Q” – may not need everything
The other parts

• Discussion
  - your ideas and interpretations!
  - no new data in this section
  - how your data and ideas mesh with other studies
  - “Q” – probably most of this 😊

• The title (!!!) (write this last)
  - why would someone choose to read your paper?
  - be descriptive and specific
Other tips for preparing the manuscript

• Write to your figures
  • “a picture paints a thousand words...” (what words are you replacing)?
  • how does a figure support the text?
  • a figure caption should concisely highlight the take-away points

• Write, put the manuscript down for three days, and rewrite
Other tips for preparing the manuscript

• Put your co-authors to work! At minimum, make them read a draft.
• When using contributions from co-authors, don’t hesitate to rewrite in your own voice
Last but not least

- NEVER start your paper (Abstract or Introduction) with “We” or “I”. The paper is about rocks or techniques or many other things, but not about you.

- Don’t write to be understood, write so that you cannot be misunderstood