

Professional Methods
Notes on Journal Submissions

1. Content:
 - a. Have something to say: a clear point of some novelty and importance.
 - b. Try to come up with an informative, yet catchy, title.
 - c. Start strong. Initial impressions are very important.
 2. Make the logic crystal clear. A reviewer who can't follow your reasoning is not a happy reviewer. An unhappy reviewer is not your friend.
 3. Have frequent rhetorical signposts establishing precisely how each point connects to the next.
 4. Give minimal pairs! If your new constraint is supposed to be responsible for the unacceptability of an example, make sure the ex. doesn't violate 17 other constraints as well.
 5. Give full paradigms!
 6. Gloss and translate all foreign language examples.
 7. If you argue against Smith on the basis that she can't handle some phenomenon, you must be able to handle the phenomenon and you must show how you can handle it.
 8. End with a conclusion. Don't just say, "In this paper I looked at passive and discussed Baker, Johnson, and Roberts." Say what you have accomplished, and connect that to some broader issue. Point to a direction for future research.
- (1) The ms. should look like a 'finished product'. You will surely have to do considerable revision, but what you initially submit should still look like it is ready to go to the printers.
 - a. Check the style sheet of the journal.
 - b. No typos.
 - c. Your prose checked by a native speaker.
 - d. Complete bibliographic references.
 - e. Proper citation of all ideas of others.
 - f. Number the pages. At least once every year I get a ms. to review with no page numbers. When I start to write my review, I need to say things like "On p. 17 ..." So now I have to number all the pages. An annoyed reviewer is not your friend.
 - (2) Use just the right number of footnotes. If material is really central, put it in the text. If it is very peripheral, consider leaving it out altogether. But if (and only if) it is somewhat important, but would interrupt the flow of your argument, put it in a footnote.
 - (3) Keep the footnotes short. You don't want the reader to lose track of where you were heading.
 - (4) When you receive the word from the editor ('revise and resubmit'; or 'address the following points'; etc.) objectively consider what you have written. The vast majority of reviewers and editors are genuinely interested in the good of the field.

- (5) Be prepared to do extensive rewriting.
 - a. Show how you can handle the apparent counter-example a reviewer brought up.
 - b. Or show how the counter-example is actually a problem for everyone (and speculate about a solution).
 - c. If a reviewer misunderstood you, assume it is your fault, and try to state your point more clearly.
 - d. Don't engage in battles with the reviewers in your revised ms.
 - e. In your acknowledgments footnote, thank the reviewers.
- (6) When you resubmit, include a cover letter to the editor explaining exactly how you dealt with his/her and the reviewers' objections. In circumstances where the objections were just flat wrong, explain precisely how they were wrong. Be diplomatic! An angry editor is not your friend.