

A brief guide to writing a publishable research article

Interested in turning your research into a publishable article? Here are some tips to get you started.

Step 1: find a target journal

Journals that may be relevant to psychotherapeutic research include:

- [Counselling and Psychotherapy Research Journal](#)
- [European Journal for Qualitative Research in Psychotherapy](#)
- [European Journal of Psychotherapy and Counselling](#)
- [Psychology and Psychotherapy: Theory, Research and Practice](#)
- [Psychotherapy](#)
- [Psychotherapy Research Journal](#).

The journal's impact factor will give you a sense of how often during a given year an average article is cited and can help provide an idea of the journal's reach and reputation.

To select the right journal for you, read the scope statement to ensure your article aligns with the topics they cover. Also scan the titles and abstracts of articles they have published recently to see if they are on a related topic or with similar methods or methodologies.

Step 2: writing

Writing the paper might seem daunting – whether you're starting from scratch or adapting a thesis. One of the best places to start is the structure. Each academic journal will have its own guidance on what your article should include. The standard international structure for academic papers typically is as follows:

- I. Introduction
- II. Methods and methodology
- III. Results
- IV. Discussion (including limitations)
- V. References

You will likely also include an abstract and keywords, which summarises your research paper briefly.

One of the most important things to remember when writing is that everything should relate back to your primary research questions. When you feel yourself getting caught up in what to include, remembering the main point of your research can help guide you to what is relevant.

Other key tips are to use clear and concise language, reference existing literature on the topic and identify why the topic is important to the larger profession.

The journal should give you information on article length. It can be particularly difficult to fit your writing within the required word count. The research results are the most important part of your work and it is usually recommended that you prioritise leaving enough space for this section.

Here are some additional resources on writing a journal article to help get you started:

- [Cooper, M. Publishing your research: some pointers](#)
- [Hoogenboom, B and Manske, R. How to write a scientific article](#)
- [Sadiku, M, Sarhan, M and Sudarshan, N. Writing a publishable paper: a primer](#)
- [Taylor & Francis author services: How to write and structure a journal article](#)
- [University of Nebraska-Lincoln: Twenty steps to writing a research article](#)

Step 3: referencing

Whenever you use anyone else's thoughts, ideas, research or material in your writing, you should reference where you found it. Referencing is crucial for a journal article because it guides readers to where you found the information used. Referencing consists of in-text citations, footnotes and bibliographies. In-text citations are shortened versions of your references that are placed directly after you use information from other sources. In-text citations are grouped together in a bibliography, which is typically an alphabetically organised list at the end of the writing of all the sources you used. Footnotes are placed at the end of a page and include additional notes or citations.

The most common citation styles are APA, MLA, Chicago, Harvard, ASA, IEEE, and AMA. Each journal should give you information on the citation style your article should be in. For citation guides and examples, [Mendeley](#) provides a range of reliable information. Besides following a citation guide, you can also use a citation generator to create your bibliography, although it is always worth double checking your citations to ensure that they are in the correct format. Some reliable, free citation generators include [BibMe](#) and the [Citation Machine](#).

If you will be referencing many different sources, it is often helpful to use a reference manager to organise and track your citations. A couple of free and highly rated reference managers are [Mendeley](#), [Zotero](#) and [Jabref](#).

Step 4: submitting

Most journals have an online submission portal. Remember to read through the required documents and instructions for authors prior to submitting. Often the tables and figures are uploaded in a separate document and an anonymised manuscript is also commonly required.

Don't be discouraged if your article is rejected or comes back with revisions needing to be made – even the most experienced researchers can get a desk-based rejection. You can always make revisions or try submitting to a different journal.

While it can be time-consuming and laborious, publishing your research is a great way of progressing your career, contributing to your profession and the larger academic field, and is a rewarding part of conducting research.

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