Avoiding Rejection and Capturing Attention

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Wiley Publishers
Everyone’s nightmare...
"I'm starting to get worried. How am I going to be adored, parodied, venerated, denounced, redeemed, and ultimately mythologized if I can't get published?"
What is the “cost” of a rejected manuscript?

1. Getting scooped by a competitor
2. Missing a grant application deadline
3. Delaying completion of a degree
4. Delaying a job search
5. Delayed or missed promotions (e.g., tenure)
6. Missed opportunities for collaborations
So, how do I avoid manuscript rejection?

Before you start writing, learn the most common reasons for rejection and how to avoid them!

**Wiley Researcher Academy Module:** Some Common Reasons for Rejection
When do rejections occur?

Upon submission
- The manuscript fails the technical screening.
- The manuscript does not fall within the aims and scope of the journal.
- The research topic is of little significance.
- The paper contains too much bad writing.

After peer review
- The manuscript presents an incomplete piece of research.
- There is a lack of a clear hypothesis or research aim.
- The goal of the research is over-ambitious.
- Methodology/materials are not described thoroughly enough.
- There are flaws in the procedures and/or analysis of the data.
- The conclusions are exaggerated and/or cannot be justified on the basis of the rest of the paper.
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So, how do I pick the “right” journal for my paper?

Do your homework

WRA Module: Choosing an Appropriate Journal
What does the editor want to publish?
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Basically, a “good story”, which - in more scientific terms - is:

- Scientifically sound, significant results that also represent a significant contribution to the literature, and that would be of substantial interest and relevance to a large proportion of the journal’s readership.

- A scientific narrative that structures and binds the results together into an integrative picture that presents something new, be it an empirical observation, a proof, or an explicit hypothesis/model of predictive value.
How to construct a “good story”: A structured approach to writing a research article...

Discussion and figures
- The conceptual architecture of your "thesis."

Results and Materials & Methods
- Tells people what you did, how, and what happened.

Introduction
- Tells the reader why you've done the present research.

Bibliography
- Links to the peer-reviewed past of your field.

Abstract and title
- The "first impression" your article will make.
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Constructing your title
Some basic rules for titles

The involvement of protein X in signal transduction pathway Y  ✗

Effect of...
Involvement of...
Evidence of...
Role of...
Insights into...
Implications of...

Protein X does Z in signal transduction pathway Y  ✔
Some basic rules for titles

A good title is:

• Succinct: 15 words or fewer, if possible

• Substantial: Describes the findings and communicates significance

• Specific: Adequately detailed, accurate and free of jargon
Your title and SEO

Wiley Researcher Academy module:

Search Engine Optimization and Google Rankings
Crafting your abstract
Considerations related to structure


Serial position effect
Therefore, in an abstract:

• Put something important and new at the beginning.
• Put something important and new at the end.
• Don’t make the middle part longer than necessary as background information for your intended readership.
We show that skt-1 is the key regulatory factor in the signal transduction pathway that causes bone to grow in response to mechanical forces.

The mechanoreception signal transduction pathway (MSTP) begins with a G-protein complex that senses forces of compression, tension and shearing in the actin cytoskeleton of osteoblasts...

The discovery that skt-1 controls the response of bone growth to mechanical stress has potential implications for accelerating bone repair by directly intervening in the MSTP at this point.

Disclaimer: The example above was invented for the sake of illustration; it does not reflect real knowledge.
Combinations of title and abstract that work well

Title:
- Statement

Abstract:
- (Intriguing) question
- Background
- Main novel finding with perspective on implications / applications / future

Title:
- Question

Abstract:
- Statement of novel finding
- Background
- Re-statement of novel finding, and speculation as to significance / application etc.
Chunking for digestibility...
Applying the principle of "chunking" throughout a manuscript

Section heading

This is hard to digest and remember...

This is easier to digest and remember...

Keep your lowest level sections below 600 words; better 300, if possible.

Wiley Researcher Academy
Structure your writing to make it easy for readers to

- identify
- navigate, orient themselves
- read
- understand
- remember

relevant new information.
What we covered:

1. Learn the common reasons why manuscripts are rejected so you can avoid making those mistakes.

2. How to find the “right” journal for your manuscript.

3. A structured approach to writing a research manuscript (Discussion, Results and Methods, Intro, Bibliography, Title and Abstract).

4. Title, abstract and subheading best practices.
Most scientists regarded the new streamlined peer-review process as ‘quite an improvement.’
Thank you for your attention!

Questions?

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