

Writing an Effective Journal Article Submission Cover Letter

San Francisco Edit

www.sfcedit.net

When submitting a scientific article for publication, always include a cover letter. The journal editor is going to decide whether to send the article to the reviewers by reading the letter and the abstract of your manuscript. The cover letter is an important component of the submission process, providing an excellent opportunity to communicate with the journal editor and to draw his/her interest to the submitted manuscript. Therefore, it is important to make a good first impression. The cover letter should contain information which will generate interest and encourage the journal editor to evaluate the manuscript, presenting your work in a way that motivates the editor to know more about the work you performed.

The cover letter should be no more than one page and half (three to five paragraphs), should be on your organization's letterhead, and addressed to a specific editor or the Editor-in-Chief.

The first paragraph should include the title of the manuscript and type of article (letter, regular paper, special section paper, review, or communication, etc.). If submitting to a special section, mention the special section's name. You should also ask the editor to consider your manuscript for publication.

The second paragraph should summarize the rationale behind your study and the main results obtained. Do not overwhelm the editor with information and do not paste in the abstract. Be concise and focus on the key elements of your study, the ones you think are especially noteworthy. Instead of explaining everything, define very well the main points, focusing on the findings relevant to the journal.

The third paragraph should point out how your study will interest the readers of the journal. Describe how your manuscript contributes to the field and how it is pertinent to the journal by referencing other work recently published in the journal. If possible, point out how your paper builds on, or is otherwise directly linked to a paper previously published in the journal. Describe what is known in the field, what new information you are presenting, how your study is novel, and how it offers direct applications, including further research studies that can be based on your findings.

You should mention the manuscript has not been previously published and is not currently in press, under review, or being considered for publication by another journal. Also, mention whether there are any potential conflicts of interest.

If the study involved human subjects or an animal experiment, state that informed consent was obtained or appropriate ethical standards were followed.

Some journals require that you provide a list of 2-3 possible reviewers. Be sure to provide their complete contact information.

If any of the journal editors has expressed interest in your work during a prior interaction (for example, on social media or at a conference), mention this in your cover letter.

Be sure to check the journal's website for any guidelines regarding writing the cover letter; remember, every journal is different. Some journals require the inclusion of specific information and the use of certain phrases in the cover letter. They also might have some formatting constraints, such as font size, length, etc. Those guidelines will overrule anything said here.

Remember to end with a closing sentence thanking the editor for considering your submission.

Of course, your letter must be free of spelling and grammatical errors.

Finally, do not forget to include all your contact information with email address, complete mailing address, phone and fax numbers.

For more detailed information regarding writing a manuscript for publication, please review some of our other articles at <http://www.sfcedit.net/newsletters.htm>. These articles approach such subjects as Writing the First Draft, An Effective Abstract, Selecting a Journal, Journal Submission Checklist, etc.