

## Description

In this article, we will explain how to further narrow down your search for a target journal. But before moving further, let us recap [Steps 1 to 3](#).

Step 1: List the field of study and related fields

Step 2: Find journals related to those fields

Step 3: List all the journal characteristics and competitive factors

Now you are ready to compare the suitability of the journal to your research!

## Step 4: Evaluate Suitability to Your Research

We will now taper the list of potential journals by comparing their characteristics to those of the existing or hypothesized work product. This is a multi-step process.

To begin, consider the ultimate goal in publishing the manuscript. Some examples of goals are:

- **To influence clinicians' behavior.** You can focus on journals with clinicians as the audience. As clinicians are busy people, you should write a short [article](#).
- **To report details of a very specialized topic:** You should focus on very specialized journals with specific circulation, albeit a smaller audience.
- **To introduce an audience to a topic that people would not normally think or care about.** Think about journals with a readership interested in the general topic of the manuscript (e.g., assessment) but who knows little about the focal topic (e.g., assessment of deaf children)
- **To get something into print that is worthwhile but not particularly sophisticated or influential, rather than never publish it at all:** A less competitive journal may be a wise choice in this situation

Once you have got your goal in place, write down your desired characteristics, noting in each case whether a given journal on the list seems to be advantageous, disadvantageous, or neutral. This process should narrow down the list of journals by at least half.

## Step 5: Review the “Instructions to Authors”

The next step toward final [journal selection](#) is to locate each of the journal's “[Instructions to Authors](#)” document. Most journals will have this document on their website. Some publish this in each issue, others only once per year. Study that page for additional information that can further narrow the list of journal options. The instructions page may contain lists of topics that are welcomed or discouraged and information on page limits. This is a good page to find out about the different types of manuscripts the journal publishes (e.g., some journals do not publish book reviews).

## Tip!

It is always better to first choose the journal before you write the article. But in case you have done it the other way around, pay attention to details like the length of the manuscript, number of figures/tables allowed, etc.

## Step 6: Final choice

By now, you have all the information you need to make a decision.

If the final choice is not yet obvious, it may be helpful to contact the journal editor to discuss the nature of the intended submission and whether or not the editor thinks it is appropriate for the publication. Editors are proud of their journals, and in some sense, are like talent scouts, in that they are always on the lookout for appropriate, quality submissions, especially from new authors. Most will give generously of their time and advice or guide in this matter.

Send the editor a brief email describing the following the essential features of the proposed manuscript and ask if the journal would be an appropriate one for a submission. This letter is different from a cover letter that you need to submit when a manuscript is being submitted. Some important points to include in this letter are:

- Title of Manuscript
- Type of Article
- Target audience
- Estimated number of words
- Brief summary (single paragraph)

After a final decision has been made on the most appropriate journal for submission, you are not ready to start writing your manuscript. Ensure that the manuscript conforms to the characteristics, style, and preferences of the chosen journal. Also, follow exactly the instructions given to potential authors. Before submission, don't forget to [edit your manuscript!](#)

## References

- [1] Chew, F., Fate of AJR Rejected Manuscripts. American Journal of Roentgenology **156**: 627, March 1991
- [2] Garfield, E., How ISI Selects Journals for Coverage: Quantitative and Qualitative Considerations. Current Contents, May 1990

## Category

1. Publishing Research

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## 2. Selecting Journals

### **Date Created**

2016/09/15

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