

Writing a cover letter to a journal

Why write a cover letter?

The cover letter you send to your chosen journal is how you and your manuscript make a first impression. And you want to make a good first impression.

You can use your cover letter to describe your study, its importance and why it will be interesting to the journal's readers. It's also an opportunity to give the journal the factual information they need – e.g. conflicts of interests and author agreement.

What to write in a cover letter?

Cover letters to journals do not vary that much – they all have a similar format and will even have some identical sentences. They will all have these main sections –

- *Introduction* – the manuscript title and authors' names
- *Study Description* – brief and easy to understand
- *Selling It* – why your manuscript is interesting and good for the journal
- *Statements* – regarding publishing, agreements and conflicts of interest
- *Reviewers* – make recommendations if you want to or if requested

ORS has made a cover letter template to save you time. Find it at the end of this guide or request a Word version from the office.

Key points to remember

- Always research the journal before writing – do they have guidelines for cover letters?
- Check and double check the spelling of the editor's name
- Ask someone to proofread and, if needed, edit your letter before sending
- Be concise – your letter should be no more than 1.5 pages
- You need to sell your manuscript not only describe it
- Allow time for writing a good cover letter – a bad cover letter may mean your manuscript is never read

More info

www.aje.com/en/arc/writing-cover-letter/ - guide and example from the company *American Journal Experts*

precisionscienceediting.com/scientific/write-great-cover-letter-scientific-manuscript/ - tips from an editing company

www.edanzediting.com/resources/cover-letter-template - template and information video from Edanz

If you have any questions about this guide or would like to suggest other topics for our Learning Center please email mahidol.tropmed@gmail.com.

(This is a general outline only, always check if the journal has any guidelines regarding cover letters)

[Editor's name]

Editor (check the title used by the journal, sometimes it is Editor-in-Chief)

[Journal name]

[dd Month 20yy]

Dear [Editor's name],

Please find enclosed our manuscript "[Title]" by [Authors], which we would like to be considered for publication as a [Submission type (usually - full-length paper)] in the [Journal name].

[Brief, easy to understand description of your study, no more than 2 paragraphs. Do not simply copy in your abstract!]

Our results will be of great interest to the readers of the [Journal name] especially those involved in [specific area of your study]. [2 or 3 clear points about why your study is of interest and use to readers of the journal e.g. an example of how your results or method could be applied in public health settings. If your manuscript is not an obvious match for the journal also explain how it can fit the journal's scope]

We confirm that this manuscript has not been published elsewhere and is not under consideration in whole or in part by another journal. All authors have approved the manuscript and agree with submission to the [Journal name].

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest regarding this study.

If you feel that the manuscript is appropriate for your journal, we would like to recommend the following researchers as potential reviewers for this paper: (choose if you want do this, it is not always compulsory. If you choose to, include 2 or 3)

1. [Reviewer Name]

[Reviewer address, including intuition and country]

Tel.: +[number including country code]; Fax: +[number including country code]

E-mail address: [xxxxx@xxxxxx.xx (use their work email not a personal one)]

2. [Reviewer Name]

[Reviewer address, including intuition and country]

Tel.: +[number including country code]; Fax: +[number including country code]

E-mail address: [xxxxx@xxxxxx.xx (use their work email not a personal one)]

3. [Reviewer Name]

[Reviewer address, including intuition and country]

Tel.: +[number including country code]; Fax: +[number including country code]

E-mail address: [xxxxx@xxxxxx.xx (use their work email not a personal one)]

Thank you for your consideration of this manuscript. We look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience.

Yours sincerely,

[Your name]

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(Your cover letter should be no more than 1.5 pages)