

Writing Your Journal Article in Twelve Weeks

A Guide to Academic Publishing Success

SECOND EDITION

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THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS • CHICAGO AND LONDON

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INTRODUCTION

Using This Workbook

ITS GOALS

The primary goals of this workbook are to aid you in revising a classroom essay, conference paper, BA or MA thesis, dissertation chapter, talk, or unpublished article and sending it to the editor of a suitable academic journal. That is, the goals are active and pragmatic. The workbook provides the instruction, tasks, structure, and deadlines needed to complete an effective revision. It will help you develop the habits of productivity that lead to confidence, the kind of confidence it takes to send a journal article out into the world. By aiding you in taking your paper from classroom or conference quality to journal article quality, the workbook also helps you overcome any anxiety about academic publishing. For those who don't have a draft to revise, I provide instructions in the chapter "Week 0: Writing Your Article from Scratch."

ITS FIELD-TESTED NATURE

Nothing quite like this workbook exists. Most books about scholarly writing give advice based on the experiences of only the author or a few scholars in the same field as the author. This workbook isn't the product of one person's experience or thought. It wasn't written over just a semester or a year. This workbook is the product of decades of repeated experimenting, with and by hundreds of scholarly writers. I have revised it repeatedly based on my own experiences of running a peer-reviewed journal and regularly teaching the workbook around the world, as well as the feedback of its thousands of readers. By staying in touch with my students as they submitted articles to scholarly journals, I learned more and more about what actually succeeds in the peer-review process, not what is theorized to succeed. Based on this knowledge gathered from the field, the latest research, and the laboratory of the classroom, I wrote and then revised this workbook to make it as helpful as it could be. Very few books about scholarly writing have undergone the fire of testing among hundreds of scholars across a wide range of disciplines. This one has.

ITS PRAGMATIC EMPHASIS

Most instruction books are prescriptive, setting up an ideal process and demanding that you adhere to it. I see such demands as impractical. My aim is helping graduate students, recent PhDs, postdoctoral fellows, adjunct instructors, junior faculty, and international faculty understand the rules of the academic publishing game so that they can flourish, not perish. Thus, this workbook is based on what works. I don't tell you to write eight hours a day; that doesn't work. I don't advise you to read everything in your field; you can't. I

don't describe how to write perfect articles; no one does. Publication, not perfection, is the goal here, so the workbook advises you based on what academics have told me they actually did, and what they were willing to do. This workbook is intended not for academic purists but for those in the academic trenches who sometimes grow discouraged and who fear that they are the only ones who haven't figured it all out.

As a result, the workbook details shortcuts and even a few tricks. And it always tells the truth, based as it is in the real world, however upsetting that world can sometimes be. Some journal editors don't like me saying that publishing in certain types of journals won't serve you well when it comes to getting hired or promoted at research universities and many colleges in the United States. Some professors don't like me saying that pre-tenure scholars should prioritize certain types of articles and research. Some academics don't like me saying that publishing in US journals is more prestigious. But I state these unfortunate truths anyway. And the workbook's advice continues to help academics achieve publishing success.

ITS RADICAL AUDIENCE

Over the history of writing this workbook and teaching my courses, I have noticed that a preponderance of my students were women, people of color, non-Americans, and/or first-generation academics. I would repeatedly hear from them, "No one ever told me this" or "I had no idea!" This workbook fills a gap in graduate education training, and has been responsible for helping many on the margins—racially, economically, internationally, and politically—feel more confident and frame their work in ways that would be acceptable to peer reviewers. That's why several people have told me that I should call this an "underground" guide to entering the profession, since it demystifies Euro-American academic conventions. Sometimes I've struggled with the aim of the workbook, wondering if I'm wrong to be helping scholars succeed in the flawed academic system as it exists, rather than working to change it. Aren't I part of the problem if I aid scholars across the globe in formatting their ideas to be palatable to mostly American white male Protestant and middle-aged peer reviewers (or those trained by them)? But in the end, I always decide that it is right to level the playing field so that everyone can play the game and advance, even those disadvantaged by that very system. I believe that everyone should have access to the rules and a chance to succeed. My hope is that enabling more scholars from the periphery—whether in terms of their scholarship or their background—to publish in scholarly journals will improve (and radicalize) academic fields and disciplines for the better.

ITS REVISION FOCUS

Most books about academic writing assume that the most difficult part of the writing process is arriving at good ideas. But in my experience, most academics, even as graduate students, have good ideas (even if they don't think so). The real problem is how many good ideas languish in unfinished, unpublished articles. What most academics need is a way to make publishable the research they have already conducted, or written about in graduate school, or taught. They know that their classroom essays, conference papers, BA or MA

theses, dissertation chapters, or unpublished articles aren't ready for journals, but they don't know how to improve them.

Thus, in my workshops I focused on guiding students through a revision of something they had already written, an exercise new to many. It turned out that revising their drafts was far more effective in training them to be better, more productive, and less anxious writers than having them start writing from scratch. Further, once they learned to diagnose and correct their erroneous tendencies by revising, they wrote their next article from scratch easily. I firmly believe that revision is the heart of good writing, and that many scholars are unpublished because they have never learned how to revise their drafts, not because they have bad ideas. This workbook focuses on revision as a key to publication.

If you think that you have no draft to revise for publication, read the section titled "Selecting a Paper for Revision" in the chapter "Week 1: Designing Your Plan for Writing." You may find that you do have something to revise. It doesn't matter if the draft is poor or little more than an outline—the workbook will still aid you in revising it (although you'll need to allot more time for writing). If you really don't have a suitable draft, please turn to the final chapter, "Week 0: Writing Your Article from Scratch."

Most books about academic writing are also excessively concerned with style. Half their pages are devoted to improving word choice and syntax. In my experience, this was the least of academics' problems. Scholarship about writing supported my own observation that what most authors need is a better grasp of macrorevising (such as making arguments, structuring the whole, and summarizing), not microrevising (such as improving style through better punctuation and the reduction of adverbs). Thus, this workbook is devoted to "deep revision" (Willis 1993), the changes that make the greatest difference to an article's quality and hence its success.

I designed this workbook to help you build both skills and self-assurance. Whether you have neither, one, or both—welcome.

ITS DISCIPLINES

This workbook is useful for those in a wide range of disciplines, including the humanities, social sciences, health sciences, behavioral sciences, professional schools, and some applied sciences. I have divided these disciplines into two tracks. (Many people use the words *field* and *discipline* interchangeably, but I use *field* throughout to mean a subcategory of a discipline.)

Many scholars have used this workbook to write journal articles in the **humanities** or **interpretive social sciences** (abbreviated in the workbook as HumInt). The humanities disciplines include philosophy, religion, history, literature, and the arts (including visual arts like painting and photography; media arts like film and television; applied arts like architecture; and performing arts like dance, theater, and music). Some have used the workbook to write interdisciplinary articles about social constructions such as gender, sexuality, race, culture, ethnicity, nation, region, class, and ethics. And some have used it to write articles in the interpretive social sciences such as cultural anthropology, cultural sociology, human geography, political theory, and so on.

Other scholars have used the workbook to write experimental, quantitative, or qualitative journal articles in the **social, health, and behavioral science fields** (abbreviated in

the workbook as SciQua). These include the experiment-based fields in the disciplines of anthropology, sociology, psychology, and geography, and in the qualitative and quantitative disciplines like political science, economics, archaeology, and linguistics. Those in the health sciences have also used it to write up research in all branches of medicine, including public health, epidemiology, nursing, pharmacy, health literacy, medical decision-making, and preventive health behaviors like cancer screening, diet, and exercise.

Still others have used it to write about research in the **social science professions**, such as education, business management, communications, public policy, social welfare, urban planning, library science, criminology, development studies, forestry, or international relations. They follow the SciQua track if the article reports on a qualitative or quantitative study, or the HumInt track if the article is interpretive. Only a few have used it for legal writing.

The workbook was not originally written for those in the **natural sciences**. That's because I have no graduate degrees in the sciences (mine are all in the humanities and social sciences), and I have rarely taught scientists. However, so many scientists have told me that they are using the workbook that I've had to bow to reality and do more to address such readers in this edition. So those writing up research in most of the applied sciences (e.g., engineering, computer science, aerospace, agricultural science, operations research, robotics), most of the life sciences (e.g., ecology, biology, botany, paleontology, neuroscience, zoology), and perhaps even the formal sciences (e.g., mathematics, logic, theoretical computer science) and the physical sciences (e.g., astronomy, chemistry, physics, and the earth sciences) will find the workbook more useful than they had. They follow the SciQua track. However, such readers will have to do more than other readers to adapt the book for their purposes, especially regarding time frames. I still recommend that scientists read and use *How to Write and Publish a Scientific Paper* (Gastel and Day 2016), which is practical and accessible, although rather oriented toward biology; *Writing in the Sciences* (Penrose and Katz 2010), which includes writing grant proposals and conference papers; and the encyclopedic *Scientific Writing and Communication* (Hofmann 2016), which emphasizes sentence and paragraph structure.

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

Although I wish it were otherwise, this workbook doesn't work by osmosis. You can't just turn the pages, read the occasional text, and then magically have an article materialize by the time you turn the last page. Reading the workbook is just a fifth of the work you must do to ready an article for a journal. The workbook makes that work easier and more straightforward, but it doesn't do the work for you. If you read the workbook just to pick up some tips, you won't learn nearly as much as you will by completing the related tasks. And you probably won't retain much. Doing is learning.

Using the Print or Electronic Version

Your reading in the workbook each week isn't passive: you must answer its questions, write in its boxes, and check off its forms. If you have the print version, go ahead and write your

responses directly on the pages. That's how the book was designed to work. If you don't want to write in your print copy or you have an e-book that you can't write in, you can download some of the forms and checklists as PDFs or Microsoft Word documents from my website, wendybelcher.com, at "Writing Your Journal Article in Twelve Weeks Forms." Then you can fill them out either electronically or by hand after printing them out. Also, check my website to see whether any interactive forms have been posted.

Completing Tasks

Each workbook week consists of some instruction from me as well as specific tasks for you to complete each day for five days of that week.

Daily Tasks

The daily tasks encourage limited but daily writing, so that the revision of your article can proceed steadily despite your other responsibilities, such as teaching, working at a full-time job, caring for family members, or writing your dissertation. That is, I founded this workbook on the research that shows that those who write daily publish more than those who write rarely. They are also happier! I'll tell you a lot more about this philosophy in "Week 1: Designing Your Plan for Writing."

Task Timeline

If you happen to fall behind on the daily tasks, which take one to three hours per day, don't give up or feel guilty! The times listed for the duration of each task are minimums; some tasks may take quite a bit longer. If you fall behind, have a catch-up session or reset your twelve-week calendar accordingly. I have seen many cases where authors took twenty-four weeks or even twenty-four months to send their article to a journal, and were published just the same. Persevering is the key. By contrast, if you find that you have moved through a week's tasks more quickly than anticipated—for instance, if you already had a strong abstract or structure—don't stop working for that week. Either move right into the next week's tasks or spend the extra time reading related articles or books.

Task Types

There are five types of tasks in this book. In *workbook* tasks, you read the workbook and complete the exercises. In *social* tasks, you talk about or share your writing with another academic, a writing partner, or a writing group. In *writing* tasks, you write some part of your article, such as the abstract, or something related to your article, such as a query letter. In *planning* tasks, you document your plans and track your success in achieving them. In *reading* tasks, you read journal articles in your field. The workbook doesn't provide any research tasks, nor does it include them in the total writing time, although you may need to do additional research to complete your article.

Task Examples

Several scholars have blogged online about using the workbook to revise an article—including Lisa Munro (2016) and Ellie Mackin (2013). If you want some sense of how others completed the tasks or how the tasks helped them, check out such blogs.

Following Disciplinary Tracks and Stage Pathways

Since scholars in different *disciplines* need different amounts of time to complete an article, you'll find two disciplinary tracks running through the workbook. Since scholars at different writing *stages* also need different amounts of time, you'll find two pathways running through the workbook as well. These are as follows:

- *Humanities and Interpretive Social Science* track: for scholars working on articles containing few to no statistics. Look for the abbreviation “HumInt.”
- *Social, Health, Behavioral, and Natural Science Fields Revision* track: for scholars working on experimental, qualitative, or quantitative articles. Look for the abbreviation “SciQua.”
- *Revising* pathway: for those who are revising drafts (e.g., of a classroom essay, conference paper, BA or MA thesis, dissertation chapter, talk, or unpublished article), not writing drafts from scratch. This track assumes that you have a rough draft based on some research, and that you will proceed through the workbook chapters in sequence. Start with “Week 1: Designing Your Plan for Writing.”
- *Drafting* pathway: for those who are writing drafts from scratch. Start by reading “Week 0: Writing Your Article from Scratch.”

No matter what your track or pathway is, start by reading the week 1 chapter. There you'll find instructions for each.

Using the Workbook according to Your Temperament

Some readers follow the workbook step-by-step. If you like a structured approach and the security of detailed instructions, then proceed through the workbook in sequence. If you do that, you will complete and submit your article to a journal. There's a lot to be said for clear guidance.

Some readers hate to be told what to do, preferring not to follow detailed instructions. That's okay too! Instead, set aside an hour or two every week to read a workbook chapter and note its implications for your revision of your article, and set aside at least five hours a week to work on the actual revising. After reading “Week 1: Designing Your Plan for Writing,” you can read the chapters in any order, focusing each week on the overall task of that chapter—for example, improving your argument or selecting a journal. When you have completed all the chapters, you are ready to send off your article to a journal. A warning about this second approach: freedom has its price—inertia. If you have a problem staying focused or haven't written much in a long time, follow the structured approach for the first three weeks.

Using the Workbook by Yourself

Most readers use this workbook on their own. Some of the tasks require submitting parts of your journal article to another academic for comments—but otherwise, you can use this workbook independently.

Using the Workbook in a Writing Group

You can also use this workbook in a writing group. Research shows that writing groups help you stay motivated, because they provide support and friendly pressure (Johnston et al. 2014; Brandon et al. 2015; Nairn et al. 2014). To use the workbook in this way, find three or more people who want to revise an article and are willing to commit to doing so in the same time frame.

Selecting group members. If your department already has a journal reading group or writing group, use it as a base. However, you don't need to be in the same discipline or field to participate in a writing group. In fact, it can sometimes be helpful to work with people who are unfamiliar with your content, which forces you to be clear about your topic. Such colleagues can bring a fresh perspective, getting you to see something from a new angle. Some combinations are good to avoid, though. Placing those in the theoretical humanities with quantitative social scientists probably won't work well. Power dynamics may negatively affect groups composed of graduate students and faculty from the same department, or groups including untenured and tenured faculty from the same university (although I know of some groups in Norway that have done just that with success). If you're a senior faculty member, don't put graduate students or junior faculty in the position of refusing your invitation to join you in a group.

Completing tasks with group members. As individuals, set aside time five days a week to work through that week's readings and tasks. As a group, commit to meeting once a week to talk through those readings and tasks and to hear members' reports on how you have each completed the week's goals as stated in the workbook. It's best to meet in person, but you can try video calls or even instant messaging or email. When the workbook task is to submit your journal article to someone else for review, do so with others from your group.

Giving feedback to group members. Before the first meeting, read the advice about how to give and receive feedback in "Week 6: Crafting Your Claims for Significance." Mainly, make sure that your group is a supportive environment for writing, not a graduate seminar for tearing writing apart. The first focuses on building strengths, the second on identifying limits. You are working together to become productive writers, not perfectionists. Also, be sure to monitor the discussion and make sure that the meeting time is mostly spent discussing writing, not fears and anxieties about the profession. Finally, treat all drafts and discussions as confidential, as the group must be a safe place for people to present their writing at any stage.

Making a commitment to group members. This endeavor will work only if your group takes it seriously. Make a written commitment to work together for an agreed amount of time. Although initially it may seem forced, people who make written commitments to each other find that they are more productive. You may either design your own agreement form or use the one on the next page. You can simply email the text of the agreement to one another in the body of the email, but it's best if every member signs a print copy that each can post as a reminder near a computer, front door, or refrigerator.

Writing Commitment Agreement for a Group

I commit to meeting with _____ [first names of group members] every week on _____ [day] at _____ [time]. During each of the next _____ [number of] weeks, I commit to reading the appropriate workbook chapter and completing the daily tasks. I also commit to spending at least _____ [number of] minutes a day, five days a week, on revising my article until it is ready for submission. If I need to adjust the time frame and order of tasks, I will do so in consultation with the group. I commit to carefully reading and reviewing other group members' articles twice. If I cannot meet any of these commitments because of a prolonged illness or a family emergency, I will inform the group immediately. If I cannot meet any of these commitments for any other reason, I will pay the following penalty: _____ [fee]. If any of us do meet all these commitments, we will gain the following: _____ [benefit].
 _____ [signature] _____ [date]

Designing incentives for group members. Many people have found it useful to promise to pay a penalty for not following through on their commitment. One writing instructor required his students to write a \$25 check to a political organization that they abhorred and give the check to him in an envelope addressed to the organization (Boice 1990, 75). For those students who did not meet their commitment, the instructor promptly sent their check to that loathed organization (along with their phone number, so they got on annoying call lists). He claimed that this worked as a great motivator! Other possible penalties can be an act of penance (such as grading exams for the writing partner) or public shame (such as writing about the commitment failure to three friends or on social media). Most of us prefer the carrot to the stick, favoring positive incentives rather than negative ones. In that case, you can collect \$20 from each group member, put it in an envelope, and split the total among those who actually send out their article. Alternately, you can use the money toward a group activity when everyone sends off their article, such as a celebratory meal. Of course, the best reward will be your sense of accomplishment when you submit the article. There's no substitute for that!

Using the Workbook with a Writing Partner

You can also use this workbook with a writing partner. This is a wonderfully effective method for completing your journal article. Since most academics' real writing challenge is getting the writing done, having a partner helps ensure that you persevere. Setting up writing partnerships can transform students' educational experiences, creating bonds that help them throughout their degree program and even afterward. The research shows that such partnerships also increase faculty productivity (Geller and Eodice 2013; Moss, Highberg, and Nicolas 2014).

To use the workbook in this way, follow the instructions above for "Using the Workbook

in a Writing Group.” It’s best to pick another academic whose goals and abilities are similar to yours and, just as importantly, is likely to persevere and keep you going. Some do their best with a competitor, others with someone who is supportive. Ideally, your partner will be both: someone who encourages you when you feel discouraged, but whose drive pushes you to keep up. You and your partner complete the tasks independently, but meet in person once a week to go over the assignments and exchange writing. Make a written commitment to each other to work together for an agreed amount of time, and agree on the possible penalties or benefits.

Writing Commitment Agreement for Two People

I commit to meeting with _____[partner’s name] every week on_____ [day] at _____ [time]. During each of the next _____ [number of] weeks, I commit to reading the appropriate workbook chapter and completing the daily tasks. I also commit to spending at least _____ [number of] minutes a day, five days a week, on revising my article until it is ready for submission. If I need to adjust the time frame and order of tasks, I will do so in consultation with my partner. I commit to carefully reading and reviewing _____ [partner’s name] article twice. If I cannot meet any of these commitments because of a prolonged illness or a family emergency, I will inform _____ [partner’s name] immediately. If I cannot meet any of these commitments for any other reason, I will pay the following: _____ [fee]. If I meet all these commitments, I will gain the following: _____ [benefit].
 _____ [signature] _____ [date]

Using the Workbook with Coauthors

If you’re writing the article on your own and then sending it to your coauthor (perhaps your advisor) for a brief review before sending it to a journal, follow the instructions in the section “Using the Workbook by Yourself.” If you and your coauthors are writing different sections separately and then combining your contributions later, follow the instructions in “Using the Workbook in a Writing Group.” If you’re working more closely, drafting practically every sentence together, read the workbook together and complete the tasks together as well. Remember that coauthoring requires careful discussion of author order; I will give more advice about this in the week 1 chapter.

Using the Workbook to Teach a Class or Workshop

You can also use this workbook to teach a writing course or a professional development workshop. Hundreds of these have been taught using it—either regularly scheduled courses for students or faculty development workshops in Centers for Teaching and Learning (CTLs). To aid instructors and directors of such centers I have created syllabi based on the workbook, enabling you to teach a course or workshop that will be rewarding and relatively effortless for you. Each syllabus is anchored in discussion and participant peer

review and thus does not require more of instructors than to read the workbook, facilitate a two- to three-hour discussion and peer-review session once a week, and provide some feedback on abstracts, introductions, and a draft of each participant's whole article. Fill out my Google Form at goo.gl/forms/TkpPrqGdoUmXxUV32 to request the syllabi in a Microsoft Word document format for 15-week, 12-week, 10-week, or 6-week courses or workshops. Be prepared for yours to be popular!

SOME PUBLISHING TERMS AND PROCESSES

If you're a novice author, you may not know basic information about journals, articles, or the publication processes that articles go through at journals. Here is that information.

What Is a Journal?

A *scholarly journal* is a periodical that publishes original research in one to fifty-two issues each year, with four to twenty research articles per issue. Each issue may also contain book reviews, review essays, response essays, and notes. The journal publishes research in one or more *disciplines* (branches of knowledge covered in university departments, e.g., English or anthropology) or *fields* (a subcategory of disciplines, e.g., eighteenth-century British literature or cultural anthropology). Almost all scholarly journals have a *peer-review* process, a quality control mechanism in which one to four scholars who are faculty experts in the author's field evaluate each article. These *peer reviewers* (also called *referees* or *readers*) identify inadequacies, misinterpretations, and errors; provide recommendations to the author for improvement; and aid the editor in making a decision about the value of the work. A journal's staff includes its *editor*, the faculty member in charge of the direction and intellectual processes of the journal; the *managing editor*, the staff member who manages the logistics of publishing the journal; the *editorial board* members, the faculty who agree to peer-review a certain number of articles per year; and the *advisory board*, the faculty who agree to have their prestigious name associated with the journal but who do not provide any labor for it. Good editors try to ensure that the journal has a short *turnaround* time (the time between your submission of the article and the journal's decision to accept or reject it, sometimes called *review time*) and a low *backlog* (the time between the editorial decision to accept your article and its actual publication date, sometimes called *publication lag*, as it depends on the number of articles the journal has already accepted for publication and are in the queue ahead of yours). You will learn more about journals in "Week 4: Selecting a Journal."

What Is an Article?

A *journal article* is an academic genre of the essay, and it has standard features. It is generally five to forty pages (2,500 to 12,000 words) in length, and contains five to fifty citations. It discusses other scholars' writing, is vetted by other scholars (peer reviewers), and is based in the concerns of a discipline (or two). One of its features is the *literature review*, a brief analysis of those scholarly books and articles on the exact topic of the article; which I call the *related secondary literature* (as explained in the week 5 chapter). Another feature is the *argument*, a stance the scholar takes toward the literature or a problem (as explained

in week 2); still another feature is the *claim for significance*, the reason why scholars should be motivated to read the article (as explained in week 6). Other necessary features are the *evidence*, the confirmation for the argument collected by the author from written sources or a study (as explained in weeks 7 and 8); a *macrostructure*, the organization of the argument and evidence into a readable pattern (as explained in week 9); an *introduction*, including the article title, abstract, and initial paragraphs that orient the reader toward the meaning and value of the article (as explained in weeks 3 and 10); a *conclusion*, the final paragraphs that summarize the article's main takeaways and articulate its implications (as explained in week 10); and a *microstructure*, the organization of the article's words into a readable pattern (as explained in week 11). Most social, health, behavioral, and natural science articles also have a *Methods* section, summarizing how the study was conducted; a *Results* section, presenting the findings; and a *Discussion* section, analyzing the findings (as explained in weeks 8 and 9).

What Processes Do Journal Articles Go Through?

The **publication process** that a submitted journal article goes through can vary radically, depending on the journal's mandate, its editor's personality and vision, its editorial board, its peer-review process, its support staff's knowledge and time, and its budget size, as well as whether the article is scheduled for a special issue. Generally, however, a journal article goes through the following stages:

Submission. The author(s) of any article must submit it to one (and only one) *peer-reviewed scholarly journal*. It is forbidden to simultaneously submit the same article to multiple journals. An article's author(s) must wait for each journal to decide whether to publish it before they send it to another journal (*single submission rule*). (The one exception is law journals.)

Editorial review. The journal editor skims all article submissions, evaluating whether an article meets basic criteria (e.g., fitting the journal's topic, citing any scholarship, being at least somewhat grammatically sound, and containing content not too similar to an article the journal just published) and has no massive flaws (e.g., having a problematic methodology or no argument). If the editor identifies basic problems, the journal rejects the article, which is called a *desk rejection*. Journal editors are increasingly exercising their discretion to reject articles without sending them on for peer review.

Peer reviewer selection. If the editor finds that the article has no major problems, that person selects peer reviewers for it. This is not easy. Editors must work hard to find scholars willing to provide reviews, sending out 28 percent more invitations to review in 2016 than they had just five years earlier (Didham, Leather, and Basset 2017, 2). They often ask one member of the journal's editorial board or scholars who recently published in the journal to peer-review the article. Some editors select one or two scholars who an author mentions in the article or who do similar work. Some journals ask the author to name potential reviewers, and they will select one of those candidates (but they will never select *only* those prospective reviewers). Those who agree to peer-review the article are rarely famous. Quite a few are emeriti professors, who have some time and want to

keep abreast of the field. Strictly speaking, reviewers are supposed to recuse themselves from reviewing articles they suspect were written by their friends or students. Reviewers are asked to return a written report quickly; they rarely do. Thus, nagging reviewers to submit their review is the main job of any journal editor.

Peer review. The peer reviewers read the manuscript, evaluating it for originality, contribution, clarity, relevance, sound scholarship, convincing findings, solid methods, interesting analysis, and strong argument. Some journals give peer reviewers clear instructions for reviewing (e.g., asking them to answer specific questions, fill out a form, or give a grade). The reviewers then send the editor *readers' reports*, which comment on the strengths and weaknesses of the article and suggest improvements to the author. They also recommend whether the editor should accept the article for publication or reject it.

The systems for that peer review can vary greatly. A *double-anonymous* (or *double-blind* or *double-masked*) peer review is that in which the peer reviewers of an article and its author(s) don't know one another's identities. This form is common in the humanities, the social sciences, and some medical fields. Given reviewers' proven bias against women, people of color, and those at less prestigious institutions, this type of review does the most to protect authors. It also aids reviewers in judging articles frankly, without fear of retribution should the author turn out to be in a position of power over the reviewer. *Single-anonymous* (or *single-blind*) peer review is that in which the peer reviewers know the identity of the author, but the author doesn't know the identities of the peer reviewers. This form is common in the life sciences, the physical sciences, and engineering, as well as for books in the humanities. *Open peer review* is that in which authors and peer reviewers know one another's identities. Some journals have experimented with other forms (such as postpublication review). Lots of research has been conducted on which form is fairest; I discuss it in "Week 4: Selecting a Journal."

Editorial decision. The editor now decides whether to accept the article for publication—based on the reviewers' recommendations and the number of manuscripts already accepted. If the peer reviewers all agree that the article is strong or weak, the decision is easy. The challenge comes when one reviewer recommends publication and another recommends rejection. In that case, the editor will sometimes send the article to yet another reviewer, to split the difference. At other journals, the editor will side with one of the reviewers, often the negative one, given how few articles a journal can accept each year. The editor then sends a *decision letter* to the author. Editors almost never accept the article as is, but rather send recommendations for revision (called a *revise-and-resubmit notice*) or else a *rejection*.

Author response. The author can give a variety of possible responses to the editor's decision. If the article is rejected, the author often sends the article to another journal, either with or without revisions. If the article receives a revise-and-resubmit notice, experienced authors always revise the article according to the editorial instructions and readers' reports, then resubmit the article to the editor with a detailed letter explaining the changes they made. Novice authors often let the process intimidate them; they fail to revise and resubmit their article, even though an article's chances of acceptance upon resubmission double.

Editorial/peer-review second round. If the recommended revisions were minor, the editor alone may vet the article in this second round of submission, without sending it back to the original peer reviewers. If the recommended revisions are major, the article will go back to those reviewers for vetting—or even to new reviewers altogether. Many articles go through multiple *review rounds*, with authors revising and resubmitting to peer reviewers two, three, or even four times.

Copyediting, proofreading, and publication. Once the editor has accepted a resubmitted article, it usually goes through *copyediting*, in which a copy editor edits the article's grammar, punctuation, documentation, style, and factual errors. The edited article is sent to the author for review, usually as a Microsoft Word document in which the Track Changes function has been turned on so that the editing is easy to see. The author usually has three to ten days to answer any questions the copy editor has, approve or reject that editor's suggestions, and ensure that no errors have been introduced. Limited authorial changes could be made at this point, although publishers frown on this and may charge the author if they are deemed too extensive. Next, the author sends the article back to the journal, along with any images, permissions for the publication of those images, and the copyright agreement (in which the author gives up certain rights to the article in return for its publication). Then the article is electronically composed and put into the journal's format, from which the article's next-to-final version, *proofs*, are produced. Sometimes there is a *proofreading* round, in which the author gets a final look at the article to make sure that no errors have entered in. The author usually has forty-eight hours to respond to proofs.

Depending on a variety of factors, journals publish articles one to three years after their initial submission. For more information about these stages, consult *The Chicago Manual of Style*, which is online at www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/home.html.

GIVING FEEDBACK TO AUTHOR

Many readers of the first edition of this workbook sent me comments, which were incredibly helpful in preparing the second edition. Keep them coming! I welcome corrections (e.g., typos or grammatical mistakes that you caught) but also any examples from your work that you want to send me (e.g., how you revised a poor title into a strong one), insights on what makes a journal article publishable (e.g., how it works in your field), and successful exercises (e.g., setting up author-order dialogue). To contact me, please email wbelcher@ucla.edu (my lifetime email). You can also go to my website, wendybelcher.com; follow me on Twitter at [@WendyLBelcher](https://twitter.com/WendyLBelcher); or search for the workbook's hashtags, [#12WeekArticle](https://twitter.com/hashtag/#12WeekArticle), [#WYJA](https://twitter.com/hashtag/#WYJA), or [#WayofWendy](https://twitter.com/hashtag/#WayofWendy).