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# Publishing in Peer Review Journals

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(adapted from presentation by Harold Koenig  
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# Overview

- Psychology of Writing
  - First Steps
  - Sections of Research Paper
  - Submitting Paper
  - Revise and Resubmit
  - Rejection
  - First Papers
  - Successful New Professors
  - Journal Selection
  - Summary and Conclusion
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# Psychology of Writing

- The more you write the easier it gets.



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# Psychology of Writing

- The less you write the harder it gets.



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# Psychology of Writing

- **Consequently, people who write less can easily lose self-esteem over writing and have a more difficult time writing.**
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# First Steps

- Outline the draft of the paper (abstract, introduction, methods, results, discussion)
  - Fill out the outline, disregarding grammar and punctuation -- get it on paper.
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# First Steps

- Work on the easiest sections first
  - Mold and shape each section  
Write and re-write
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# First Steps

- I do analysis first.
  - I make sure that I have findings worth discussing.
  - I write the Methods and Results Sections first.
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# Sections of Research Paper

- Title Page
  - Abstract
  - Introduction
  - Methods
  - Results
  - Discussion
  - Tables
  - Figures
  - References
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# Title Page

- 1. Title (Concise)
  - 2. Authors and Affiliation
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# Title Page

- 2. Authors and Affiliation
  - (do not change your name, and be consistent in the use of your name).
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# Title Page

- 3. Corresponding Author with contact information
  - 4. Funding Source
  
  - (some journals want these two pieces in an Acknowledgment section)
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# Abstract

- Length: 150-250 words
  - Gerontology/Medical Style: Objective, Methods, Results, Discussion
  - Include Sample Size
  - Should provide your take home message (what you want readers to know)
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# Introduction

- Longer the Introduction, the more theory
  - Establish importance of study, important previous research
  - How does your study add to the literature
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# Introduction

- 5-8 pages in most Psychology and Interdisciplinary journals
  - Could be longer in Sociology
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  - 1-3 pages in major medical journals
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# Introduction

- Social Science articles in medical and public journals tend to have less writing but more tables and more info in tables.



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# Introduction – # of Total Words

- Social Forces (Sociology Journal), 9,000
  - Child Development (up to 40 pages including references)
  - Journal of Gerontology: Social Sciences, 5,000
  - American Journal of Public Health, 3,500
  - American Journal of Psychiatry, 3,500
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# Methods

- Sample: When collected, response rate, how collected
  - Measures: Instruments, survey items (details on instruments depends on type of journal)
  - Statistical Methods and Software
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# Methods

- Describe Sample, age, race, SES, gender



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# Results

- Refer to Tables and describe significant findings
  - Psychology and Medical Style -- Include Statistics for major findings, even if in Tables
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# Discussion

- 4-5 pages
  - Don't simply restate the results
  - Discuss how study is unique and major findings
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# Discussion

- Integrate findings with previous research
- Explain and hypothesize what your findings mean



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# Discussion

- Limitations of Study
  - Conclusion, Practice/clinical Implications
  - Directions for Future Research (only a little effort on this)
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# References

- Always cite peer-reviewed journal articles
- Style varies by journal, ensure correct format



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# Submitting Paper

- Prepare short letter to the editor (name of paper, not submitted elsewhere)
  - First submission should be polished, (first impressions are critical)
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# Revising and Resubmitting

- Read editor's letter and get his/her feelings about manuscript
- Read reviewers comments carefully and underline or highlight each concern



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# Revising and Resubmitting

- Letter to the Editor

- Thank for excellent reviews
- Indicate that paper is revised along lines suggested by reviewers and paper is stronger



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# Revising and Resubmitting

- Letter to the Editor
    - Describe how you did what the reviewers suggested
    - Always do what the reviewers ask
    - Never be defensive or argumentative even when the reviewers are incorrect
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# Revising and Resubmitting

- Need to respond to at least 75%-85% of concerns
  - Need to respond strongly to concerns that you can clearly address
  - Don't respond to the 10-20% of the concerns that you cannot address
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# Revising and Resubmitting

- Reanalyze data if that is requested (but try to avoid)



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# Revising and Resubmitting

- Response Letter should be a “stand alone” letter.



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# Rejection and Resubmitting to a Different Journal

- Reviewers are very idiosyncratic (next journal may give totally different reviews)
  - Reviews from less prestigious journals may not be consistent with the quality of the journal
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# Rejection and Resubmitting to a Different Journal

- Make Corrections that are easy to make
  - Make Corrections if there are things that are clearly wrong
  - Make Corrections to fatal flaws if possible (may not be able to change sample)
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# First Papers

- In grad school use data in **class papers**. It is good to begin data based papers as early in your career as possible.
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# First Papers

- Carve up your dissertation.
  - Try to come up with 3 to 5 papers.
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# First Papers



- Papers should be brief and focused.
- Papers should not be lit reviews.

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# First Papers

- Dissertation writing is generally too wordy.
  - They provide more detail than is needed.
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# First Papers

- Cut, Cut, Cut.
  - It will be painful.
  - Your treasure is other peoples redundancy and unnecessary details.
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# First Papers

- Only work on papers that have findings that are good, and make an important contribution.
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# First Papers

- Find an example of someone's work that you admire and figure out how they put it together.



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# First Papers

- Try to write papers that are relevant to several journals.
  - For each paper pick 4-6 potential journals.
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# Papers

- Read “Instructions to Authors” and understand what types of manuscripts are appropriate for the journal.
  - Do not hesitate to email journal editors to ask for clarification, if needed.
  - Potential reviewers.
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# Successful New Professors

- Limit classroom prep to 2 hrs./class
  - Spend 30-60 min./day on writing
  - Spend 2 hrs./week discussing teaching & research with colleagues
  - Keep daily time logs
  - Integrate research into teaching
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# Successful New Professors

- Have Multiple Mentors
  - Have published an article from their Dissertation
  - Perform a reasonable or minimal amount of service
  - Seek Advice
  - Spend more time writing research than conducting research (Productive not Busy)
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# Journal Selection

Choose journals that offer the following elements:

Journals that are associated with a professional association and are received as part of the membership in the association.



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# Journal Selection

Select journals that are more highly ranked in the citation index.



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# Journal Selection

## Tips to Consider



Stay with an editor that likes your work.

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# Journal Selection

## Tips to Consider



Stay away from book chapters, unless it is a major book in your field or there is a personal obligation.

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# Journal Selection

## Tips to Consider

Write papers that can be submitted to 5-8 different journals. Depending upon your timeline and willpower, start with the most prestigious first.



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# Journal Selection

## Tips to Consider

Prestigious journals help more with tenure and with grants.



# Journal Selection

## Tips to Consider

Be realistic. Know the quality of your paper and the quality of the journal.



For instance, *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* has a 85-90% rejection rate.

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# Journal Selection

## Tips to Consider

Don't get too down  
about a rejection.



Every paper has a home.

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# Journal Selection

## Tips to Consider

Don't revise papers too much. "Too many cooks" can spoil a paper.



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# Journal Selection

Tips to Consider

Bad Papers Live on  
Forever



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# Journal Selection

## Tips to Consider

Really bad papers can be like rotten apples. They can spoil the bunch.



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# Summary

- No matter how much effort that you put into a research study, it will be for naught unless your results are published.
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# Summary

- It is critical to publish your results because you made a promise to your respondents/subjects.
  - You promised them that their time/responses/blood/DNA are important
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# Conclusion

- Getting papers published is a skill than can be learned.

