

HARVARD SCIENCE REVIEW WRITER'S HANDBOOK- FALL 09

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This handbook covers the basics of everything you need to know about how to research and write an article for the HSR. Some of this information is also covered in the Writer's Update or at the writer's workshop, but this is the complete and definitive primer. Please read the whole thing as you begin the writing process and contact your Associate Editor or the Editors-in-Chief with any questions.

Writing for HSR: An Overview

1. **Article Proposal:** The proposal gives you the opportunity to explore your ideas and present your vision of your article to the HSR editorial board. Based upon your proposal, the board will decide whether to accept, suggest modifications to, or decline your article. Article proposals consist of three parts:

- The introduction to your prospective essay, consisting of one or two paragraphs that grab the reader's attention and present your topic.
- An outline of your article showing the sections and logical flow of the "story," and the ideas that you plan to incorporate.
- A list of 5-7 references (WWW references should be avoided) in proper format (see below).

2. **Preliminary Rough Draft and Rough Draft:** If the editorial board approves your article proposal, you will be assigned to an assistant editor who will assist you throughout the writing process. At your first meeting, the associate editor will inform you of what is expected of you as a writer, provide feedback on your proposal, give you advice on how to find sources, and may offer additional ideas on how to proceed. Two weeks after your proposal is accepted, you will be asked to submit a preliminary rough draft that is essentially a diagnostic of your progress in writing and finding sources. The rough draft itself will be due two weeks after that. Please remember, at this early date and throughout the process, **it is important to meet all the writing deadlines**. Teams of other HSR staffers are relying on *you* to finish on time, and one late article holds up the entire organization. So for the sake of your own schedule and to respect the time invested by your colleagues, please submit completed drafts on time.

After your first meeting with your associate editor, your first priority should be finding strong sources for your article. Once you have gathered all the sources that you plan on using, begin writing the rough draft. Focus on the overall structure and flow of your ideas first, then the details of the story. Of course, make your rough draft as good a draft as possible—it will save you a lot of trouble during revisions. A complete list of all the sources you used *must* be included with the rough draft, and inserting references in the text as you go along is much easier than putting them in afterwards. As a rule of thumb, tend towards putting in too much detail in your rough draft. It is a lot easier to cut long rough drafts than to try to fatten up short ones. Besides the text and references, your rough draft should also include graphics with captions and references (see "Submitting your Article").

3. **Final Draft:** After you submit your rough draft, your associate editor will review your article and meet with you within a week's time to discuss revisions. This is your opportunity to get feedback on how your article is progressing as well as to introduce major structural changes to your article. Your final draft should incorporate these revisions and be proofread extensively for issues of style and grammar. It should also include pull quotes and writer's biography (see "Submitting your Article").

After your completed final draft is submitted, your associate editor will review your article and inform you of any final changes that were made to your article. This is your final opportunity to suggest article revisions.

No textual revisions can be made after this point without the explicit permission of the Editors-in-Chief, so be sure that at this point you communicate clearly any revision suggestions to your associate editor. Once your associate editor has finished revising your article, it is submitted to the editors-in-chief for final

editing. You will then be trained to use InDesign to layout your own article. Now it will be ready for publication!

Tips on Writing Your Article

1. **Tone** — The tone of the articles should be fairly informal and almost conversational. These are not term papers for class. Analogies and clear, non-technical explanations will help make your article more interesting and readable. If you don't understand it, don't write about it; your audience won't get it either. Definitely try to develop your own style of writing, but don't be unusual for the sake of being unusual, or at the expense of clarity.
2. **Organization** — Begin with one or two introductory paragraphs that first rope in the reader with an interesting scenario, anecdote, statistics, etc. then introduce your topic. While it's up to you how to proceed after this point, many writers have found it valuable to begin with a section providing either a brief history behind your topic or some essential background information. Your subsequent sections should flow in a logical manner in which each section builds upon the previous one. Make sure that the connections between each section are clearly made. You should conclude with a final section (often brief) that serves to recapitulate the main points you have made in your article and (if applicable) leaves the reader with a view toward the future.
3. **Title** — Keep it short and catchy, but not too vague. Examples from past HSR articles: "Cancer Therapies: Defeating the Enemy Within," "The Heart of the Matter" (artificial hearts), "Maglev Trains: An Attractive (And Repulsive) Option for Future Travel."
4. **Section headings** — Section headings ought to capture the thrust of the argument made in this portion of your article. Someone who reads just your section headings should get a good feel of what your article is about — so, when writing a section heading, take a global perspective. Keep the section headings concise. Examples: "Killing cells for your own good," "Why cancer drugs don't kill you," "Promise of a revolution," "Looking for the greenhouse."
5. **Short paragraphs** — Not quite newspaper style, but keep them short. Each paragraph must offer a discrete quantum of information, and no more. This makes for a clearer presentation.
6. **DO NOT PLAGIARIZE!** — Do not simply recapitulate the arguments or facts from a single source. Articles that do this will not be accepted for publication and will be subject to University disciplinary action in cases of blatant plagiarism.
7. **References** — Use the format given below for your reference list and your in-text citations.
8. **Picture captions & credits** — Nothing beats a succinct picture caption—well, almost nothing. Try to relate the picture or graphic to the main thrust of your article in as few words as possible. Many readers just look through the magazine's pictures, unjustly overlooking our articles — which means that the captions are the only text they encounter. So do try to pack at least some useful information into those terse captions. You *must* tell us the source for each picture so we cite it properly and get permission to reprint it. Example: "In the 1989 movie *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*, an evil Nazi drinks from a fake Holy Grail (top left), making him age rapidly (top right). Mutations in the *sgs1* or *klotho* genes do the same thing to yeast or mice respectively (bottom). (Lucasfilm & Paramount Pictures / H. Kerabi et al.)"

Submitting Your Article

You should submit the following items for the rough or final drafts of your article:

1. Electronic text of the article (*Rough and final draft*)

Microsoft Word format preferred, double-spaced. Please include the title (and subtitle, if any) and subheadings.

2. Graphics (*Rough draft*)

Submit graphics as separate files with the *rough draft* (see next section for more info on selecting graphics). Include captions as text (e.g. Figure 1. ...) at the end of your article after the references section. After each caption, cite the source of the graphic in proper format and include the filename of the accompanying graphic, as well as the URL for any internet graphics.

3. Pull quotes (*Final draft*)

Highlight these in your article. Each pull-quote should be 30 to 40 words long. Choose one pull-quote for every two pages of your article. It is likely that not all of them will be used in the final article layout.

4. One to two sentence biography (*Final draft*)

Example [for an article about paper airplanes]:

Harvey S. Richards '07 is a biochemistry concentrator from Quincy House. He folded his first airplane just after he learned how to walk and has been studying them ever since.

Finding and Formatting Graphics

High-quality graphics are essential to a professional publication. You should select pictures that:

- (a) illustrate themes or concepts that would be otherwise difficult to visualize
- (b) reduce a sequential process described in the article into an easy-to-follow schematic diagram.

Keep an eye out, also, for incredible images that will grab the attention of the reader. The best source for graphics is books and magazines or journals. Use the scanners in the Science Center to scan in your graphics. Include references for **every** graphic in a format similar to what you use in your bibliography.

- **Camera-ready graphics.**

This could be original artwork, photography, or pictures from a book or magazine.

- **TIFF files**

Please supply all photos and line drawings as black and white TIFF (.tif) files at 300 dpi resolution or higher. Internet graphics are usually poor quality, and if used, should be at least of 300x300 resolution. Line drawings should be scanned at a higher resolution because they have sharp edges that will look jagged at low resolution. In some circumstances, your design editor may be able to reproduce drawings or models at higher resolution; please feel free to discuss this with him or her. Be sure to always record the source of every graphic you submit (whether from the internet or periodicals).

- **Other formats**

Consult your assigned design associate editor for questions about other acceptable graphics formats.

- News briefs should have 1 graphic, reports and commentaries 1-2, and articles 3-5 graphics.

References

General Catalogs

1. HOLLIS
<http://holliscatalog.harvard.edu/>
This newly renovated system is the best way to find books, journals, and government documents in Harvard's library system.
2. HOLLIS E-Resources
<http://lib.harvard.edu/e-resources/index.html>
Use this page to search Harvard's large database of subscriptions to online journals and other resources. You can also use the E-Resources link from the main HOLLIS page to search for E-Resources just as you would for print resources.
3. Other library catalogs
<http://lib.harvard.edu/catalogs/index.html>
If you can't find what you're looking for at Harvard, any librarian can help you submit an interlibrary loan request from the Boston Public Library, MIT libraries, Yale libraries, the Library of Congress, and many others.

Popular Press

1. Lexis-Nexis
<http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:hul.eresource:lexnexau>
This incredible database contains the *full-text* of virtually every major newspaper and magazine in the U.S. (along with selected television and radio transcripts). Lawyers have to pay thousands of dollars a month to use this service, but it's available to Harvard students for free.
2. Reader's Guide
<http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:hul.eresource:rgretrox>
Database of popular magazines.

Scientific Articles

1. INSPEC
<http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:hul.eresource:inspecxx>
Articles from physics, engineering, electronics, computing, and information technology journals.
Dates: after 1969
2. JSTOR
<http://www.jstor.org.ezp2.harvard.edu/>
Search by keyword a large database of journals in a range of disciplines.
3. PubMed/MEDLINE
<http://www.pubmed.org>; also <http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:hul.eresource:pubmedpi>
Citations, abstracts and some full-text articles for research published in all the major biology, chemistry, and medicine journals. Try looking up the journal in Harvard E-Resources if you cannot access full text through PubMed.
Dates: after 1966
4. Zoological Record Plus
<http://lib.harvard.edu/e-resources/details/z/zorecord.html>
Provides thorough coverage of animal science and veterinary literature. The system searches using a subsidiary of Cambridge Scientific Abstracts (CSA), which is itself an excellent search system.
Dates: after 1978

Miscellaneous

1. US Patent database
<http://patents.cos.com/>
Search for patent applications since 1971. This database will retrieve the original application, complete with pictures.
2. Conducting Research
<http://lib.harvard.edu/research/index.html>
A Harvard Libraries webpage including research guides by subject and tips for doing research at

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| 3. | Harvard.
Librarians and HSR staff writers and editors. Sometimes human beings can be infinitely more helpful than machines. |
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Citation Formats

Please cite everything in your article that is not your own knowledge or writing; when in doubt, cite. List your references at the end of your article in the order in which they are cited, following the format from *Science Magazine*. You can select this in EndNote in the Cite While You Write Feature.

Concerning EndNote, the format we would like everyone to use for their bibliography is the format labelled "Science" (as in Science Magazine) in End Note. Once you have downloaded end note onto your computer and installed it, a bar will come up in microsoft word which will allow you to insert citations from end note. In that bar, there will be a dropdown list where it asks what citation format you would like, if you go to Style, Select Another Style, Science, that will put everything into the correct format which would look like this.

This is the correct format for a citation (1).

1. A. Goyal, Harvard Science Review 21, 56 (2009).

Cite your sources each time you use them in the text by just putting the number of the source after the sentence. Please use parenthetical in-text citations with the number of the source, not footnotes/endnotes. For example, "Science is a social activity" (4). If you use a source multiple times *consecutively* in a single paragraph (for three different statistics, for example), you only need to put the parenthetical citation after the last sentence in which you use that source. If you use a source in two paragraphs, cite it in both.