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11,220 Words on:

Writing Articles for Publication

**This is a very short e-book that deals with how to get your
articles published**

Website Created in August 2008

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Read All The Instructions First How To Use This E-Book

This Book Contains Sound Recordings Of The Text

This e-book contains narrations of the text, which is recorded in audio files. If you want to listen to the sound recordings, left click on the hyperlinks that appear on the first page, and on Part 1, Part 2, Part 3, and Part 4 of the book. (When the hyperlink appears in the table of contents, you must left click twice, once to get to the page with the hyperlink, and once again to open the sound file.) The following is an example of one of these

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Instructions On How To Open Footnotes

To read the footnotes in this book, left click on the numbers that appear in the sentences with footnotes. To return to the main text after reading a footnote, see the instructions below.

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To return to the main text of this book, after reading a footnote, or viewing another website, click on the left arrow  on the upper, left portion of your screen, one or more times, until you are back to the book's main text. Clicking on the left arrow can also return you to the table of contents, from various sections of the book.

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The ideal way to use this e-book is to read the topics of your choice, and then do an Internet search with Google, or Yahoo, to determine the latest expert opinions about the topics. If you want to access information from the academic journals, do your searches with Google scholar. To access the three search engines mentioned above, click on the following hyperlinks.

<http://www.google.com>

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Sophisticated Internet Searches

If you want to carry out sophisticated searches for websites and Internet videos, the following web link will be very helpful for you. When you left click on this web link it will take you to one of my websites that contains a number of unique search strategies, many conventional and specialized search engines, directories, and search pages, including Internet videos. However, most of this material is focused on the psychological sciences, but the search strategies, and search engines are usefull for any subject, incouding writing.

www.Tech-For-Text.com/SP

About The Book

Some of the material in this e-book is in a rough draft

format, and portions are study notes that I created for college studies. This material was modified and converted into a website in August 2008.

The Table Of Contents Consists Of A Series Of Hyperlinks

The following table of contents consists of a series of hyperlinks, and it serves as a good outline of this book. Left click with the mouse on the link to go to the section of the book you are interested in reading.

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The Purpose Of This E-Book And My Related Research

I wrote this paper in my effort to find answers to a number of questions about article writing for magazines and technical journals. Some of the questions I wanted answers to are: How can a beginner get published?

What is the best way of writing a magazine article? What is the proper way to write a journal article? How can a beginner get published in a technical journal? Is it possible to earn money from writing articles? How can a

beginner break into this business? To answer these questions, and many others, I studied a number of books, some of which are listed in the reference section of this paper. I coupled the information I learned with some creative thinking, and my answers are written in this e-book.

Part 1

[Left click on these words to hear a sound file of Part 1](#)

Introduction

Most people that write articles for magazines and newspapers consider themselves reporters. The information article writer, as the phrasing is used in this booklet, is not a reporter. He or she is an individual who is presenting information as a teacher. That is, their writing usually represents ideas that they either created themselves or learned as a result of many months or years of study. These individuals may get their articles

printed in magazines, occasionally in newspapers and perhaps more often in technical journals.

Article writing for magazines is very different from writing for technical journals. However, there are some common elements and problems to both types, which will be seen throughout this booklet. The purposes of the two types of articles are not the same. Magazine articles are written to attract and entertain the reader. These articles try to involve the reader emotionally in the text. They

are sometimes written like a story. Some of these articles put the reader into the scene. However, the type of magazine article writing that is discussed in this booklet also teaches the reader something, such as how to build a bookcase, the latest theories in physics, or how to solve a difficult problem. The journal articles are also written to teach the reader, but the readers are people who have technical expertise. These articles are not written to be entertaining. The journal articles provide

information, which might be interesting, but that is not the primary goal of the article. Journal articles often present new theoretical frameworks, experimental results, and critical evaluations of other journal articles.

There is a third type of article, which is essentially a hybrid between the typical magazine and the technical journal. Good examples are Scientific American, and the many computer magazines found in bookstores and newsstands.

Before I continue this discussion it will be helpful if some distinctions are made between several types of writing. Many people, who had a minimum exposure to the study of writing, believe there is only two types of writing, good and bad. The very basic rules for all types of writing are the same, but there are rules that differ from one style to another. A very brief discussion of six types of writing is as follows:

- **Magazine Articles:** These articles are written to entertain and inform the reader. Magazine articles are

written with a lead (the beginning words of the article) that is intended to attract readers. Informal language is often used in magazine articles.

- **Newspaper Articles:** Articles that report the news in daily papers are written also with a lead that attracts the reader. However, the most important information is placed on top. Less important information is placed further down. That is, as one descends the column the information tends to be less important. Informal language can also be found in this type of writing.
- **Formal Academic Style:** This type of writing is the most restrictive. Every grammar rule is adhered to. Sentences generally do not begin with BUT, AND or any other type of coordinating conjunction. Technical

terminology is generally not used in this type of writing, unless the terms are carefully defined. As the name implies, only formal language is used with this type of writing.

- **Technical Journal:** Journal articles are written with technical terms. The sentences may be longer than other types of writing. **The passive voice is usually quite acceptable, and when describing certain procedures, such as an experiment, it is preferable.** Split infinitives are sometimes considered acceptable in this type of writing. The grammar and style rules are essentially slightly looser than the formal academic style, but they are also somewhat more restrictive than magazine and newspaper writing in most, but not all areas. Formal language is usually utilized in this type of writing. The advantage to this writing style is it offers the flexibility needed to write very difficult descriptions in precise ways.

Informal technical writing: This type of writing is similar to the above, except the language used is less formal. Sentences might begin with a coordinating conjunction, such as BUT, OR, AND, etc. The words YOU and YOURS might be used, when instructing the reader. This type of writing is often used in popular books that teach something. Most of the books I read on magazine article writing were written in this style. In fact, this entire booklet is written in an informal technical writing

style. This writing style is more flexible than any of the other styles on this list. It permits the most precise descriptions and allows for very detailed instructions.

A hybrid of technical and magazine article writing:

This type of writing involves technical words. The material in this category is written primarily for hobbyists, semi-experts and technically minded amateurs. It has some of the qualities of the formal technical writing used

in journals, combined with the style used in magazines.

These articles are written to inform and entertain the

reader. Such articles are written with a lead that is

intended to attract the reader. Examples, of this type of

writing are found in the computer magazines, National

Geographic, Scientific American and many other

specialized publications.

However, things are not as simple as implied above.

Each magazine and each technical journal usually has its

own unique style. (This can be thought of as a sub-style.) This is discussed under the next heading.

How To Deal With The Style Related Requirements Of Magazines And Journals

What makes magazine and journal article writing difficult is that each periodical has its own writing style. This style includes such factors as the perspective of the article, such as an article written from the point of view of

a young single person, housewife, a feminist, a professional chemist, a biologist, etc. This point of view, in the literature dealing with magazine articles, is called the slant of the article. Each magazine essentially accepts articles with approximately the same slant. For example, a feminist magazine will usually only accept articles that support the feminist movement. The same term (slant) can be applied to technical journals, which have articles slanted for specific types of experts.

Other style related elements are the configuration of the article, type of vocabulary used and many other factors. Thus, the ideal way of writing for a magazine or journal is to study the periodical extensively, over a period of months. In this time the subtleties of the articles it publishes will become apparent. However, it will be necessary to analyze the style consciously, and duplicate this style in your article(s) you send to that specific magazine. Under ideal conditions the writer

should be able to answer most, if not all of the following questions about a magazine he or she studied: (The questions that come first on the list are generally more important than the questions that follow.)

- 1) What are the types of articles published by this periodical?
- 2) What types of people are most likely to read this periodical, and what kinds of articles are likely to interest them?
- 3) From what point of view are the articles written from?

(What is the slant of the articles?)

- 4) What type of vocabulary is used in the articles?
- 5) Are technical terms used?
- 6) What is the average grade level of the articles?
- 7) How many words long are the average articles in this periodical?
- 8) How many words are the longer articles?
- 9) How many words are the shorter articles?
- 10) What is the overall configuration of the average article?
(Such as how long is the lead or introduction? How long is the main text? How do the articles conclude? Does the

sentence length vary from the beginning of the article to the end?)

- 11) What are the overall configuration and length of the paragraphs?
- 12) How selective is this magazine? (This can be estimated by finding out how much they pay for an article, the higher the price the more selective they will generally be. In the case of a technical journal the estimate can be made by asking the editorial staff. In general, the more prestigious a magazine or journal the more selective they will be.)
- 13) What percentage of the writing is in the passive voice?
- 14) What is the average sentence length?

15) How long is the average paragraph?

Some of these questions can be quite difficult to answer simply by studying the magazine. There is a very easy way of answering the questions that relate to mathematics, such as what is the length of most of the articles or what is the average grade level of the text in the magazine. The easy method consists of the use of an optical scanner, text conversion software, a computer,

and good quality grammar checking software. The optical scanner is a device that copies any material on paper and places it in the computer's memory. The text conversion software translates what the optical scanner copied into standard text, which allows the user to store it in word processing software. This translation process allows the use of grammar checking software. Such software does a lot more than check grammar. Most high quality grammar checking software can automatically perform

the calculations needed to answer all of the following questions¹. (The questions that follow were taken from the above list. The remainder of the questions on the original list must be evaluated with human faculties.):

¹ I analyzed many of my own documents with grammar checking software. I did not apply the technique described to magazine articles because I do not own an optical scanner. To use computer analysis without a scanner would require typing articles into the computer manually, which is not feasible because of the time required.

6) What is the average grade level of the articles?

7) How many words long are the average articles in this magazine? (You would get the total word count of all the articles you placed in the system. Then you would have to divide by the number of articles you put in the system to get the average. This also applies to the two questions that follow, if more than one article is used for an average.)

8) How many words are the longer articles?

9) How many words are the shorter articles?

13) What percentage of the writing is in the passive voice? (This is given in a precise percentage with the software I use, which is called Correct Grammar.)

14) What is the average sentence length?

15) How long is the average paragraph? (With the software I use you have to divide the number of words by the number of paragraphs manually to get the answer.)

Good grammar checking software can answer a number of additional questions as can be seen below.

The computer evaluated the text in this booklet as follows:

Note this e-book was edited slightly when it was converted into a website. The statistics you see below are for the original material.

Correct Grammar Readability Analysis for:

C:\WP51\DOCUMENT\AWRITE

Paragraphs:	161
Sentences:	566
Words:	9679
Syllables:	15933

Sentences / paragraph	3.5
Words / sentence	17.1
Letters / word	5.1
Syllables / word	1.64
209 passive sentences	36%
Long sentences	0

Misspelled words 0
Other errors corrected 0
Sentences hard to read 0

Flesch Reading Ease score 50.2 Standard

Grade level required 12.9

% U.S. adults who understand 69

Flesch-Kincaid grade level 10.5

Gunning Fog index 13.9

Under ideal conditions computer analysis of your article should match the average computer analysis obtained from the articles in the magazine you are sending your work to. (And of course, the human evaluations should also match.) If there is not a match, it is advisable that you emphasize your willingness to rewrite the entire article to meet the requirements of the editor.

The Article Should Appear to be a Single Unit

The main body of the article should generally consist of paragraphs that appear to be connected into one unified verbal structure. This generally applies to both magazine and journal articles, as well as most types of writing.

That is, the good article writer wants to avoid a string of paragraphs that do not appear to be a single unit.

However, in the writing process paragraphs are often written as separate units and then placed into specific

sections of the article. This writing method has many advantages, especially when you are not sure how to write certain sections of the article when you start the work. Thus, the problem is how to connect the paragraphs into a single unit, which we call the article. In the following paragraphs there are a number of techniques that can be used to solve this problem.

To connect two paragraphs change the last sentence of the first paragraph and/or the beginning sentence of

the second paragraph, in such a way as to create a connection between the two paragraphs. Other paragraphs can be added to this two paragraph unit in the same manner as described above until the entire article is a single unit. The advantage to this method is it allows you to write the article in sections. It gives the writer the freedom to think out his ideas in separate fragments on the computer screen, and then edit and rearrange the text with the cut and paste functions of the

computer. This method also allows the writer to make good use of outlines. There is only one disadvantage with this technique; it is time consuming.

Another method that can be used to connect paragraphs is to use transitional paragraphs as connecting links. This method has all the advantages of the above. But what is a transitional paragraph? A transitional paragraph is a paragraph that is usually short, and its beginning sentences are written so it

connects directly with the paragraph above it. The last few sentences or words of a transitional paragraph are written to connect the paragraph below it. The disadvantage to this method is it may require more words to write your article and it is time consuming.

One method of getting paragraphs that fit together perfectly is to start writing, ideally at the beginning of the article, and continue writing until the end of the article. In this writing process each sentence is carefully written

to relate to the previous sentence until the article is completed. With this technique you may find that the entire article is only one to three excessively long paragraphs. This can easily be corrected by breaking up the large paragraphs into smaller ones. The result of this writing method is the entire article generally appears that it was created from the ground up as a single unit, which is precisely the way it was built. Another advantage to this method is it is very efficient. Very little

editing is needed. Thus, much time and effort is saved.

The disadvantage of this technique is it takes a considerable amount of skill and you must have a very good idea of what you want to write about. With this technique you do not rearrange the paragraphs because that would interfere with the connecting links of the paragraphs.

A modified version of the above is to write portions of the article that are several paragraphs in length as single

units. Then these units must be connected into a single article by modifying the last sentence and/or the first sentence of each unit so they appear to be a single structure. The individual units can also be connected with transitional paragraphs. Another way of connecting these multiple paragraph blocks of text is to place a subtitle, which relates to the entire article, on top of them, but this might not be acceptable to all editors. (Most of this booklet was written with the ideas described in this

paragraph.)

Paragraphs that present different aspects of the same basic idea can be connected with an introductory paragraph, which contains one general unifying statement, such as a thesis. This format is used in certain basic essays. It was used to connect the above six paragraphs.

The Focus of Magazine and Journal Articles

There are two basic types of articles, with respect to the

concept of focus. One is the general article that has a broad focus. A good example of this is found in encyclopedia entries². These articles cover many different points of a topic. Magazine and journal articles generally should not be written with a broad focus, like encyclopedia entries. Magazine articles generally should be narrowly focused on a specific idea. For example, in

² Max Gunther, in his book Writing the Modern Magazine Article, emphasized this point, and he used the encyclopedia article as a comparison with

stead of writing an article on how to build furniture, write an article on how to build a specific piece of furniture, such as a bookcase. The broader topic, how to build furniture, might be fine for a book.

The focus of the article will be considered more interesting by most editors and readers of magazines, if it includes one or more individuals. (This generally does not apply to journal articles, where such a focus might be

the magazine article.

considered highly inappropriate by the journal's editorial staff, unless the article was about a case history involving psychology or a related field.) For example, instead of writing how to build a bookcase, you can write how you solved your problem with storage space, by building a wall to wall bookcase. In this case you are the person. If you write about a major scientific discovery, it will be considered more interesting by magazine editors, if you write about the scientist and how he or she made the

discovery.

Of course, it is not always feasible or appropriate to involve a person in an informational article. However, if there is a person involved, in a way that is appropriate to the text, the article will probably have a better chance of getting published. An alternative method is to use the reader as a person. An example is: writing an article on how you and your family can solve your storage problems by building a wall to wall bookcase in a team effort. (The

word you refer to the readers.) Another way of involving people in your writing is to use hypothetical individuals, which is only appropriate for certain types of articles, which usually involve human behavior science. In such cases, you must clearly indicate that the individuals are hypothetical and give them names. Then the hypothetical individuals are used in explanatory examples. Of course, this would not be considered as interesting as discussing real people.

It should be noted, that in most highly intellectual and textbook related writing, people and theories are often kept separate, unless the subject involves human behavior science. For example, if you look up the theory of relativity in the encyclopedia the article is generally totally focused on the theory, with a brief acknowledgment about Einstein. On the other hand, if you look up Einstein, very little is explained about his theories. But keep in mind this is not the way to write

magazine articles; it is the way to write encyclopedia entries.

How to Write a Good Title

Titles are important because they encourage the editor and ultimate purchaser of the periodical to read the article. In journals the title can inform the reader what material is contained in the article. Titles can help people find the article, after it has been published, by means of a library or computer search. This is more true with journal

articles, which have longer and more precise titles. With magazines the title is often changed by the editor, if the article is published. However, the primary purpose of the title for a magazine article should be to encourage the editor to read your work, which is a primary part of getting your manuscript published.

Magazine and journal titles are generally quite different. Magazine titles are usually short and catchy, and might not totally indicate what is in the article. They

sometimes present a mystery to the potential reader.

They are often designed to stimulate the curiosity of any one who sees the title. Journal titles are essentially just the opposite. They are long, and often precisely describe what is in the article. Journal titles can be quite clumsy, but they serve very specific purposes quite well, which are informing the potential reader of what is in the article and they facilitate library and computer searches.

The one way to create a title for an article is to create

a preliminary title first, and as you write you might think of a better title. The final title should be only considered when the entire work is completed. Sometimes creating a number of titles, such as in a brainstorming effort, can produce the best results. The title for a magazine article should stimulate curiosity, be fairly short, and describe some interesting aspects of the article. The title for a journal article should precisely reflect what is in the article, or at least come close to this ideal. This is not too

difficult to achieve because the title can be quite long.

The Lead of a Magazine Article

The lead of the article is the first introductory words, which are written to attract the reader. These words also attract the editor who decides whether or not the article gets published. Thus, in magazine articles the lead can be quite important. The questions that you should ask yourself about your lead are as follows:

- Does your lead stimulate curiosity?

- Does your lead stimulate interest?
- Does your lead indicate why it is important for the potential reader to read the article?
- In general will your lead encourage the potential reader to read the entire article?

Introductory Paragraphs

There can be a single introductory paragraph in a very short article, which can also be thought of as the lead. In longer articles there may be several paragraphs that introduce the article. The introductory paragraphs should

do just what the term implies. The reader should have a good idea about what the remainder of the article is about after reading these paragraphs. Just like the title and the lead, the introductory paragraphs should stimulate interest in the remainder of the article.

The Main Body of the Article

(This applies to both magazine and journal articles.) The body of the article is the section that comes after the

introduction and before the conclusion. It contains most of the information of the article. In this section the ideas, relationships, examples and other related information is presented. The main body can be thought of in terms of sections, which introduce different aspects of the topic.

The Concluding Paragraph(s)

(This mostly applies to magazine articles, but in some cases it can apply to journal articles also.) It is difficult to

describe what constitutes a good conclusion, because it depends on the specific article and the style requirements of the magazine. Max Gunther states in his book (*Writing the Modern Magazine Article*, fourth edition, 1982, pg 133) that: "There is only one law about the endings of magazine articles: they must be satisfying." Writing conclusions is partly an art, as writing is in general. Thus, there is no precise set of instructional steps that can convey precisely how to write a good conclusion. The

general thinking pattern needed to write good conclusions can possibly be conveyed with one or more of the statements on the list that follows at the end of this paragraph. Note, the statements on the list do not have a precise instructional meaning, because we are dealing with an art. The idea is for the writer to follow these statements in a creative sense. This means he or she must more or less create his own meaning, and see if the thinking flowing from that meaning helps him write good

conclusions. If one statement does not work try the next one on the list. If they all do not work for you modify the wording and/or your thinking in such a way that the modified statement helps you produce good conclusions. The statements might also help with other aspects of writing, and are as follows:

- Think of the beginning of your article as a question, the main body as information, and your conclusion as an

answer to the question. While keeping this idea in mind write your conclusion. (I used this to write the conclusion to this booklet. The conclusion that resulted suggested an excellent description of the booklet in terms of questions, which was presented on the first page.)

- Think of the very first words of your article as a starting point in physical space, imagine that the main body is the distance you traveled, and think of the conclusion as your

final destination. Then, describe your final destination in such a way that it produces a satisfying ending for your article.

- Think of your article as a set of statements that logically results in a conclusion. What conclusion do the introductory and middle paragraphs logically lead to? Thus, you can write a conclusion with this idea in mind.

- Think of each sentence in your article as a series of sequential steps. When it comes time to write the conclusion, ask yourself what are the remaining steps. Then try to develop a conclusion with this thought in mind.

Another technique, which can be used with the above method, is presented in this paragraph. Writing a good conclusion can be done by following one of the

statements (suggestions) on the list at the end of this paragraph, in such a way as to convey a satisfying ending to your article³ Keep in mind that you are dealing with an art, and you can create poor quality conclusions with any of these suggestions, if you are not careful and artistic in your efforts. Of course, the idea is to select the

³ Note the wording: in such a way as to convey a satisfying ending to your article The actual way is not stated, because this will be different for each person and article. That is, writing conclusions is an art.

suggestion on the list that is appropriate to the article you are writing. The suggestions for writing conclusions are as follows:

- Summarize the information you presented in different wording
- Suggest corrective action to a problem
- Show that there is hope
- Indicate that it is necessary to be realistic and except a problem or human limitations

- Restate the primary point of your article
- Introduce a new fact that connects the information you already presented into a unified whole
- Tell an antidote
- Restate your lead in different words, perhaps with some reinforcement.
- Connect your closing statements to the previous paragraph
- Wish the reader luck on the do it yourself project that you explained in the main body of your article
- State that we (the scientific community, social scientists,

the human race, etc.) are still searching for answers

- Say: in conclusion
- State your hopes for the future

Part 2

[Left click on these words to hear a sound file of Part 2](#)

How to write a Technical Article for a Journal

It is not easy to explain precisely how to write a technical article, which is often based on some type of experiment or review of published experimental literature. First there

are different types of technical articles, such as in chemistry, physics, psychology, etc. In the following paragraphs a special method was created to explain how to write the various types of technical articles. This method consists of a list of questions, with some directions, that guide the writer precisely through the steps needed to write the article. The irrelevant questions are ignored or modified to relate to the article that is being written. (Some questions will generally be

irrelevant because the list was made for many different types of disciplines.) The questions are answered in writing. The answers to the questions should be written in such a way that it produces the desired article, in the style requirements of the journal that you plan to send your manuscript to. This should be done in a deliberate way. Alternatively the questions can be answered without thinking about the final article, if a computer is used with word processing software. Then, after the

questions are answered, the resulting text can be modified by, correcting errors, removing unnecessary sections of text, providing additional written information, and rearranging with the word processor's cut and paste functions, with the aim of producing the desired article. Whatever method is used it is necessary to check the style requirements of the journal and edit the text to meet the requirements.

There are seven sets of questions in the list, which

can be answered in any order, but the layout of the completed paper is as indicated by the layout of the headings under each set of questions. The easiest method of writing the paper is to follow the numbers next to the word step. If you do this the first step will be the materials and methods section, which is the fourth item on the list⁴.

⁴ The words in quotation marks come from Technical Writing Situations and Strategies by Michael H. Markel, third edition, 1992, page 479.

1) **"title of the article and name of the author"** a)

What is the title of the article? (The title should be detailed enough to describe the article, if possible.) b)

What is the name(s) of the author(s)? c) What affiliation(s) and title(s) does/do the author(s) have? All of the above can be easily written at any point. The title can be changed at the end of the work if necessary, but all of the above is listed here as Step 7.

2) **"abstract"** How can you describe or summarize the article in roughly 80 to 170 words? (Describe or summarize your article in approximately the number of words indicated.) Step 6

3) **"introduction"** How can you introduce your topic, in terms of defining the problem, providing background information, which can include a short review of already

published literature? (The introduction can be several paragraphs long, if necessary.) Step 5

4) **"materials and methods"** a) What materials were used? (Describe all relevant details about the materials.)
b) Who was the subject? (If there was one or more individuals or animals involved as experimental subjects, describe all the relevant details about them.) c) What equipment was used? (Provide the relevant information

about the equipment, which in some situations includes the model numbers of the devices.) d) What methods were used? (Explain the methods in detail and provide all relevant details.) Step 1

5) **results** a) What were the results? b) How can the results be described? (Describe the results in detail.) Step 2

6) **discussion** a) What factors and/or dynamics caused the results to turn out the way it did? b) What theory or hypothetical model explains the results? c) How accurate are the results? d) What does the results mean? e) What does the results suggest as far as future research is concerned? f) What does the results mean in terms of potential applications to practical situations? g) What would be good concluding words for your article? (The concluding words should relate to the ideas

appropriate for the discussion section.) Step 3

7) **references** What references did you use? Step 4

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The Writers Who Are Most Likely to Get Published

The people that are most likely to get published are famous and/or are considered to be experts by the general public. In addition, people who have an established reputation as a professional article writer in

the minds of editors have an excellent chance of continued success. These people usually have a degree in journalism and built their reputations with years of hard work. Another category of writers that may have a moderately good chance of getting published are individuals with formal academic qualifications. Their best chance of getting published might be found in technical journals. If they can write in a simplified manner they might also get published in a magazine.

However, most Ph.D. theses do not get published.

Formal degrees do not guarantee the individual that his or her articles will be published. Thus, these people have less of a chance than the individuals that fall into the first categories mentioned.

Writers that are most likely to get only rejection notices are individuals who do not have formal qualifications and are not well known by the general public or by editors. Even if their work is excellent the

editors will most likely not interpret the work as such.

This will be explained under the next heading, and later on in the text methods will be presented to overcome the difficulties of getting published.

The Emotional And Logical Judgments Of Editors

Editors are human beings and the dynamics that are likely to be activated in judging an article are partly emotional as well as logical. When people make judgments there is often one of two psychological

dynamics that are activated. One is called the positive halo effect and the other is the negative halo effect, also called the forked tail effect⁵. This is explained along with

⁵ The positive halo effect and the forked tail effect, are widely known concepts that come from social psychology. The positive halo effect is a favorable bias based on one or more positive traits, with the positive trait often being irrelevant to a sensible evaluation. The forked tail effect is an unfavorable bias based on superficial or irrelevant negative traits. The theoretical ideas behind these concepts have been experimentally verified, in a wide range of situations. I do not know if there was any experimentation done with article writing and

other dynamics of the editorial selection process in the following paragraphs.

When an editor sees a manuscript from a highly successful expert or a famous person, he is likely to interpret the material as good for publication. If there are certain minor errors they will be ignored and left for the copy editor to correct. The high status of the writer

editors, but it is most likely that editors have the same psychological responses as the rest of the human population.

results in a favorable bias and the entire article is judged more favorably than it would be otherwise, which is an example of a positive halo effect. In general, there is a tendency⁶ to judge higher status people and their work

⁶ There are most likely exceptions to this tendency. There are situations where there are greater expectations of a high status person. If they deliver average work, they may be criticized for the same work that a lower status person might receive a compliment for. However, generally the tendency is to unconsciously interpret the higher status person's work more favorably, even if it is average, which reduces the chance of such criticism.

more favorably, than work of similar quality done by lower status people. Of course, there is a definite limit to this positive bias. If the work of a high status writer was truly of poor quality, it would most likely be sent back for major revision or totally rejected.

Editors are also quite logical. He or she knows that an article written by a famous person will sell magazines, simply because the public is interested in that individual.

Thus, a poorly written article by a famous person certainly might justify the investment of time and effort in the rewriting process, which might have to be done by the editorial staff. Such an investment in time would generally not be justified for an article written by a novice writer, without any fame.

Most articles that come into a large magazine are quickly rejected. The number of articles received by a magazine can be excessively high. Part, but certainly not

all, of this rejection process is most likely psychological. That is, the negative halo effect, (forked tail effect) might be activated in the editor's psyche. This results in a general negative bias based on the appearance of undesirable factors, which can be lack of formal qualifications, **a typical unpublished writer**, a sloppy manuscript, a couple of grammar errors, etc. The fork tail effect can be activated even if the manuscript is **excellent**, which is likely to **happen when the writer is**

an unknown. What tends to happen when the forked tail effect is activated, is the person, in this case the editor, senses the unique qualities of the manuscript and interprets them as errors or deficiencies in writing or reasoning ability. This interpretation would be just the opposite if the writer was of high social status, and/or had advanced degrees. The unique qualities may be interpreted as an act of creativity, or even an act of genius. In general, people who are of modest social

status and achievements are evaluated at a lower level, then higher status people, even when their work is at the same level of quality. If an editor gets to know and like a skillful writer, of modest status, the forked tail effect can most likely be partly or even totally neutralized over time.

However, in actual practice this might be extremely difficult. Most editors (especially editors of major publications) will simply want to get to know established writers that proved themselves with other magazines.

There is some practical logic here. Established writers may have editorial judgments that are just as good as the editor, if the writer is familiar with the magazine. The editor knows this. Some established writers also worked as editors at certain points in their career. Thus, the editorial staff of a magazine might wisely consider the established writer's articles over other writers, simply because they trust his judgment.

When the established writer's work is rejected, it

might be return for revision, or the writer might sell it to another magazine. Actually these writers might get a considerable amount of rejections but they also get many highly paid acceptances.

Another very important factor that the editor considers is the appropriateness or inappropriateness of the article for his magazine. The article can contain very interesting ideas and be very well written and still be rejected, for reasons that are quite logical. The

information the article contains may be of no interest to the typical reader of the magazine. In addition, there can be an excess of similar articles that have been widely published, which may certainly reduce the interest of the readership. Another reason for rejection is even if the writing is excellent, it might not be appropriate for a specific magazine. For example, if an article was written in the academic style of a typical term paper, most popular magazines would reject it, even if the work was

excellent. If the writer was established or famous they might request that the entire article be rewritten with a style that is appropriate for their magazine. (How to deal with the style related requirements of magazines and journals was already discussed under a separate heading.)

Part 3

[Left click on these words to hear a sound file of Part 3](#)

**How to Increase the Chances of Getting Published
if You are a Beginner and have no Special
Qualifications
that would Influence an Editor.**

In the following paragraphs there are a number of ways that a beginner might be able to get his or her work published. Some of the methods presented are quite realistic, other methods are quite expensive, and some of the suggestions would be of a modest amount of help in getting published.

Submit your work to small publications and

work your way up the ladder: One of the most realistic ways of getting published is to submit good articles to small local publications, such as college news letters, club publications, local newspapers, small magazines, etc. Some of these publications might have a readership of a couple of hundred or less. The smaller the size and the poorer (in terms of money) the greater the chances of having your work published. However, these publications

usually cannot pay for an article. Those that can pay, will only give a tiny amount, which would not justify the time investment from a financial perspective. Of course, people submit articles to these small publications for non-financial reasons. However, by starting with the smallest publications it might be quite possible to graduate to larger publications over a period of time. The earlier material that was published can be used to persuade editors of slightly higher levels to publish your work or

give you a job writing. Thus, beginners can very possibly work their way up the ladder from the smallest to the largest over a period of years; by showing editors there published work. This is a very important principle and if it is combined with prolonged study of writing and one or more specific specialized subjects, such as, journalism, psychology, sociology, the hard sciences, it is likely to lead eventually to a financially successful occupation. Realistically such an endeavor would probably take years

to achieve, which is true of most professions.

Incidentally, the dynamics described in the first part of the above paragraph (starting with a small publication) is based on competition that exists between publications.

Each magazine is in effect competing for the writers they believe are the best. They will pay as much as they can afford to get the writers they want. The highest paying magazines will be able to attract writers who are famous or who have a long history of success. The medium size

publications will usually attract writers with lesser status.

The lowest level publications might accept any article that is well written, even if the person is a layman or a student, simply because they cannot compete for the higher status writer, who is too expensive for them.

Start your own news letter: Another way of getting published is to start your own news letter, which is not necessarily a practical idea for all writers.

However, it is easy to produce a news letter on a home

computer with word processing software. It is relatively easy to make several hundred copies with offset printing, photocopying methods, or even with a home printer. Of course, the difficulty would be in distributing the publication. This can be done more effectively if the news letter is associated with a club or organization. It is relatively easy to start such a club in some college environments. This method can be quite feasible if there are a number of individuals working together on such a

project. And of course, there is not likely to be any significant financial gain directly from such an effort, but it might lead to future opportunities that are financially rewarding, through the method already described.

co-author work with a formally qualified

person: If you do not have the academic degrees in a field that you are writing about the chances of getting published are reduced. The way to get around this is to write your article with an individual that has formal

qualifications. For example, if you are writing an article on psychology, you can write it with a psychologist that has a Ph.D. In reality, you will probably be doing most, if not all, of the writing and research. If the basic ideas you are presenting are the result of your creativity, you will have to convince the formally qualified person that your ideas are valid. The formally qualified individual will check your work. He may make corrections, or changes in relation to his opinion. He might modify your creative

ideas or add his own to the text. Your work must represent his opinion as well as yours because he is a co-author. When the formerly qualified individual makes changes you will most likely have the responsibility for rewriting the paper. This is not necessarily a negative, because most likely you have much more writing expertise than he. This is also a highly practical idea if you can find a qualified person that is willing to work with you, but there are some disadvantages to this idea. The

individual with the formal qualifications will probably get most of the credit for the work. If you received money for the article from a publisher part of the money would go to the formally qualified person that worked with you.

In most cases probably one fourth to one half of the money should go to the formally qualified person. The actual amount should be determined by the amount of effort and or time he or she put into the article.

A modification of the above idea, which is probably

more appropriate for a book, is to use the formally qualified person as an editor. His name would have to appear on the work as an editor. This modified method would be probably less effective than the above, but you would get more credit for the work if it was actually published.

Another method that is also related to the above, is to have the expert (such as a psychologist) check and correct your work if necessary. Then have him or her

write a letter confirming (certifying) that your work is accurate from the perspective of the profession involved.

If the article is submitted to a publication along with the certifying letter of accuracy, there is a better chance of getting your work published.

Co-author your work with a well-known writer

or famous person: If you happened to know a well-known writer or famous person you might be able to persuade them to co-author an article with you. This

would greatly increase the chances of getting published, especially if the person was truly famous. In the real world it is highly unlikely that you could create such a relationship, if one does not already exist, unless you have some unusual qualifications. Famous people and writers who are well known are usually overwhelmed by offers.

Submit many articles: The more articles you submit the greater the chances of getting published.

Sometimes it is simply a matter of luck, which article gets accepted. If the editor happens to need an article of the type you submitted, he may decide to publish it. If your style happens to stimulate his interest, he might decide to put it in the next issue. Generally only a small percentage of articles are accepted for publication. The percentage for people that are not famous or well-known writers are even smaller. Thus, the more you submit, the better your chances.

Indicate a willingness to write or rewrite the article to fit the editors requirements: Add a cover letter with your article, explaining your willingness to rewrite the article to fit the requirements of the magazine. This willingness should be emphasized, but you should indicate in a very subtle way, if feasible, confidence in your current draft. The cover letter should also try to sell the idea in the article, if that can be accomplished in a tactful way. Most of the selling will be

done by the article itself. However, if you have any qualifications or have published some articles, it should also be put in this letter. This method is probably much better than sending a quarry letter if you are not an established writer, who is known by the editor.

Use photography with your writing when

appropriate: And still another way of increasing the chances of getting your article published is to learn photography. If you can produce near professional

quality photographs and use this material with your writing, you have a better chance of getting published.

This skill will not necessarily help all types of articles.

The skill is most useful in articles that instruct the reader on how to do something, such as how to build a book case. This skill might be useful also for some types of journal articles. There are certain types of experimental results that can be documented with photographic methods. Journal articles discussing microscopic entities

will be enhanced by photographs taken through a microscope. Of course, such skills can only be developed with many hours of study and practice, which might be a good investment of time for some writers.

Use computer sketching in your writing: If you can use a CAD (computer aided design) program or drawing software to make diagrams to accompany your writing you will probably have a better chance of getting your writing published. This of course, only applies to

situations where drawings and sketches are needed to help illustrate the ideas in the text. This skill will probably be most valuable in writing certain types of articles for technical journals.

Use the internet to advertise your work: There are a number of ways that published material can be advertised on the internet. One method involves a special service, which cost \$300 to \$500 a year. If there are 100 or more orders for your work, which should be

put in book form, the material is published and the author receives 20 percent of the money earned from the sale.

Unfortunately, advertising on the internet is equivalent to advertising on your home telephone answering machine.

It is highly unlikely that many people will log into that specific number where your book is advertised.

Publish the articles yourself: Another way of getting articles published is to publish them yourself in book form. There publishing companies that will publish

and distribute your work for a fee. There is a chance that the books will sell at a profit, but it is not likely that this would happen in most cases. However, having a published work might facilitate a person's career, which could lead to financial reward. Unfortunately, this is a very expensive option, one company, Vantage Press, gave me an estimate of approximately \$15,000 for 500 to 1000 copies, which included distribution costs.

Article Writing as a Business

Is it possible to make money selling articles? The answer is it is possible, but quite difficult unless you can develop an established reputation as a professional writer. If you are perceived as some type of expert your chances are better. This was already discussed in the preceding paragraphs.

The fees that are paid for most articles are rather modest, roughly from \$75 to \$250. Some publications even pay as little as \$25 and there are some that may

pay more than \$250. The major magazines, which are highly selective, may pay established writers \$1000 to \$3000 for one article. Keep in mind the length of these articles can range from a few hundred words to approximately 6000 words, with a rough average of about 1400 to 1800 words. There can be a considerable investment in time writing articles in the precise way needed for publication. Also many of the articles are likely to be rejected or require major revision before they

are accepted by an editor. Much of the time investment will be spent trying to sell articles, which can involve mailing out hundreds of letters to publications all over the United States. A considerable amount of time will also be involved in studying the style and type of articles published in specific periodicals. The cost of postage, telephone calls, computer supplies for writing and the purchase of periodicals, will further reduce any profits that are made from any successful sales.

However, according to Duane G. Newcomb, as his ideas were expressed in his book A Complete Guide to Marketing Magazine Articles, it is quite possible to make a business from selling articles. The primary idea is efficiency. Newcomb suggested that you figure an hourly rate by estimating the time it takes to write and sell an article. To make a satisfactory income you would have to develop a considerable level of efficiency, which could involve producing thirty or forty articles a month. He

recommended at most of your sales should be aimed at medium size publications, as opposed to the few major magazines. The major magazines pay considerably more, but the articles they demand often require much more time to produce and there is a very high probability that your article will be rejected. The idea is to focus on the markets that pay much smaller fees, but there are a large number of such publications. They are much less selective than the major publications. Articles for these

publications can often be produced in a few hours, if you are an experienced magazine writer.

If you are not a published writer your primary goal must be to get published, and not to think about efficiency or money. Then after you have published a number of articles then your focus should switch to efficient article production and sales, with an emphasis on a good hourly rate of financial return.

Under the following headings there is additional

information that can be used to develop the business of magazine article writing.

What Are the Different Types of Informational Articles

There are a number of types of informational articles, some of which are presented in the following list:

The general hard science article This is any type of article that deals with technological or natural science.

Examples are articles on: astronomy, biology, chemistry, nature, physics and technology. If you have a degree in any of these fields or can work with someone who has a degree, these articles can be a good choice to write for possible sales.

General social science article These are articles that

deal with human behavior science, such as anthropology, sociology and psychology. Ideally, if you are writing in this area you should have a degree in the field or be working with someone who has.

Self-improvement articles These articles teach various ways of improving oneself. Examples are articles on: applied psychological principles, better methods of communicating, physical exercise, social skills and weight

reduction. Once again you have a better chance of selling these articles if you have a degree in the field or if you are working with someone that does.

Health articles These articles deal with health problems, and methods of maintaining good health. If you can work with a physician when writing such articles, there will be a better chance of getting published.

How to articles These articles explain how to do something, such as how to build a table, how to improve your multimedia computer, how to bake a cake. These articles can be quite short. If good quality photographs are provided the chances of selling these articles are better and the amount you get will probably be greater.

List articles These articles give a number of ways of improving something, such as ten ways to improve your

health, five ways to improve your writing, eight ways to improve your income. List articles can also be quite short, and relatively easy to write.

The technical article for the amateur These articles deal with technical subjects, such as computer technology, photography, electronics, mechanics, etc.

Technical articles for professionals These articles are

written for professionals. They contain information on experimental research, the development of new theories, and critical evaluations on previous research. The articles in this category may become part of the established literature, which can eventually appear in textbooks. Generally there is no fee paid for these articles, but getting such articles published can advance your career.

Articles for trade journals⁷ These journals are in certain ways similar to the above, and sometimes the professional journals are even considered to be trade journals. The distinction is articles that appear in most trade journals are not the result of experimental

⁷ According to *Writer's Market* (edited by Kirsten C Holm 1996) suggests that trade journals are a good market that is often overlooked by writers, until they become aware of the many opportunities in this area. Incidentally, this publication should be carefully studied by anyone who is hoping to get published.

research. They are essentially articles that relate to a trade in some way. A fee is usually paid for these articles. Providing photographic material will increase your chances of selling your work to these publications. Photographs will also increase the value of your article.

Business articles These articles deal with problems of business, management, economic and other factors that can affect business.

Writing Many Articles From the Same Information

It is possible to write a number of magazine articles from the same information. (This technique is outlined in detail in the Handbook of Magazine Article Writing edited by Jean M. Fredette, 1988.) For example, if you write an article on problem solving for a family magazine, you can produce a second article on problem solving for a

business oriented publication. The lead and slant of the various articles produced with the same information is of course different. That is, the articles must be written to meet the needs of the publication that you are sending the manuscript to, but the article can contain essentially the same information you use to write other articles. The advantage of this technique is a saving of time. Once you have mastered the knowledge to write a specific type of article, such as an article on problem solving, you can

write a second third and fourth article in much less time. This saving in time is important for those who engage in magazine writing for a living. The technique simply means making more money in less time.

A modified version of the above is to add some additional data to the information you already used to write articles. For example, if you have written several articles on problem solving, you can add some information to your knowledge about problem solving and

write a new set of articles such as how to solve very difficult problems.

Part 4

[Left click on these words to hear a sound file of Part 4](#)

Are Quarry Letters Useful

Many books on writing recommend that a quarry letter describing the article that you plan to write be sent to the editor. This includes journal articles. Thus, **the editor will instruct you on what he or she wants.** If the editor is not interested you saved time, which would have been spent writing an article that would have been rejected. It is easy to write dozens of quarry letters, especially with a computer. The same letter can be used with a different name for the editor. Thus, you could

make hundreds of offers in a very short time to find an editor that is interested in a specific article you plan to write. And when you find an editor that is interested, you can tailor the article to his precise desires.

My opinion is quarry letters would only work for well known writers who have been widely published and for established Ph.D. writers for technical journals. The method would also probably work for less prominent writers, if the editor knows them and already published

some of their work. If you fall into the above category then quarry letters are extremely useful, if not then the above is not good advice for you.

Much of the published advice on writing articles comes from highly successful writers that are well known to editors. Most of their advice is quite useful for anyone who writes. However, some of their suggestions would only work for individuals that are more or less similar to themselves. This is especially the case with the quarry

letter. A busy editor will probably quickly reject almost any quarry letter from an individual who is unknown to him or her.

An alternative method to the quarry letter was presented earlier in this text. Basically the idea was to send a cover letter along with your manuscript indicating your willingness to rewrite the entire article to meet the precise specifications of the potential publisher.

Since the quarry letter is useful when you reach a

certain level of establishment in the field it is worth knowing how to write these letters, which is explained under the next heading.

How to Write a Quarry Letter

A quarry letter can be written by answering the questions at the end of this paragraph in writing. Ignore or modify the questions that are irrelevant to you and your article. When answering these questions keep in mind that your

answers are intended to sell your idea to the editor. Your final answers should be edited in such a way as to produce a one or two page formal business letter making your offer. During the editing process it might be necessary to remove some text or add additional information. It is better to keep the letter to a single page if possible. The questions for this letter writing process are as follows:

- **Your opening statement:** What would you like to write about? (Tell the editor what you would like to write about and ask him if he is interested.)

- **Te summary of the article you plan to write:** What are the primary points of your article? (Give a brief summary of your article. This summary should be as interesting as possible.)

- **Your Qualifications** a) What are your qualifications to write this article? b) Do you have any formal degrees? c) What articles did you publish in the past? d) What are the most impressive magazines that published your articles? Try to answer these questions in such a way as to convince the editor that you are qualified to write the article. Add any other information to persuade the editor of your ability to do the job.)

- **The closing statement** What is your closing statement?
(Ask the editor, if he or she is interested in your article to contact you at a specific phone number and address.)

Conclusion

Thus, the answer to the question, can you get published, is yes, but there is some type of price involved, which can involve time, effort and money. If the time and effort

investment is low, the money investment might be high (as can be seen from the fees of Vantage Press) or the editor that accepts your work might be from an insignificantly small publication, who cannot pay any fee.

If the time and effort investment includes both years of study and building a reputation as an established article writer, there may be significant financial rewards for your effort. However, you must keep in mind that in the article writing field being good or even excellent by itself

will not get you published. You must convince editors and readers that your efforts are truly valuable.

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