

# How to prepare a manuscript for *BioScience*

THE *BIOSCIENCE* STAFF

The editors of *BioScience* welcome original manuscripts written for a broad audience of professional biologists, biology teachers, advanced students, and policymakers. Overview articles summarize recent advances in important areas of biological research. Roundtable articles bring together the views of different authors on issues important to biologists. The Education department contains essays on the teaching of biology to students and to the general public. Professional Biologist discusses issues in the practice of biological professions. Thinking of Biology consists of essays on the philosophy of biology, and Biology in History articles address the history of biological thought. Biologist's Toolbox articles discuss technology's contribution to the practice of biology. Forum essays address topical issues.

Articles in the preceding categories, whether invited or independently submitted, undergo peer review of content and writing style. *BioScience* also publishes some nontechnical material that is generally not subject to peer review. In this category are letters pertaining to previously published material; Features, which are stories of general interest to scientists; Editorials, which are short opinion pieces; Viewpoints, which are longer opinion pieces; book reviews and special book articles; and occasional Special Reports.

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## Overview articles

Overview articles review significant scientific findings in an area of interest to a broad range of biologists. Twenty-first Century Directions in Biology articles are overviews that discuss molecular methods. Overview articles should include background information for biologists in a variety of fields, and they should be free of jargon. Articles must be no longer than 20 double-spaced pages (6500 words, excluding figures, tables, and references). No more than 60 references should be cited. Please include an abstract of up to 150 words and list up to five keywords.

*BioScience* occasionally publishes special sections, which are compilations of overview articles on particular topics. Like other *BioScience* overview articles, they undergo peer review. Special sections are organized by a coordinator who helps maintain a timely production schedule and ensures the pertinence and coherence of the whole. If you wish to coordinate a special section, write the editor in chief at [bioscience@aibs.org](mailto:bioscience@aibs.org).

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Editorials may cover any topic of interest to biologists, from science policy to technical controversy. Editorials should not exceed 500 words and may not have references or footnotes. The word

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Teaching Biology articles are solicited and are aimed at educators. Book reviews and Features are generally solicited. Send queries regarding ideas for feature stories to the features editor ([features@aibs.org](mailto:features@aibs.org)).

## Manuscript preparation

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**Document format.** Use double-spacing and 12-point font throughout all text, tables, references, and figure captions. Number all pages. Avoid the use of footnotes in the text. Put tables and figure captions at the end of the document. The title page should contain authors' names, titles, affiliations, and postal and e-mail addresses.

**Style.** Follow *Scientific Style and Format* (CBE 1994) for conventions in biology. For general style and spelling, consult the *Chicago Manual of Style* (Chicago 2003) and a dictionary such as *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* (Mish et al. 2003). Also refer to "A Guide to *BioScience* Style" at [www.aibs.org/bioscience/resources/BioScience\\_Style\\_Guide.pdf](http://www.aibs.org/bioscience/resources/BioScience_Style_Guide.pdf).

**Symbols, acronyms, and units of measure.** Define all symbols and spell out all acronyms and units of measure the first time they are used; abbreviate them thereafter. Use the metric system, SI units (*Système international d'unités*), to express weights and measures.

**Tables and figures.** *BioScience* style is to capitalize only the first word in figure and table titles (and subheads), except for proper nouns. Use lowercase letters to indicate footnotes in tables and panels in figures. Put panel labels in the upper left corner of figures, if feasible. Construct tables without vertical rules. For more general guidelines on the construction of tables, see chapter 13 in *Chicago* (2003).

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- Journal article: Bryant PJ, Simpson P. 1984. Intrinsic and extrinsic control of growth in developing organs. *Quarterly Review of Biology* 59: 387–415.
- Book: Ling GN. 1984. *In Search of the Physical Basis of Life*. New York: Plenum Press.
- Chapter in a book: Southwood TRE. 1981. Bionomic strategies and population parameters. Pages 30–52 in May RM, ed. *Theoretical Ecology*. Sunderland (MA): Sinauer.
- Technical report: Lassister RR, Cooley JL. 1985. Prediction of Ecological Effects of Toxic Chemicals, Overall Strategy and Theoretical Basis for the Ecosystem Model. Washington (DC): Government Printing Office. Report no. 83-261-685.
- Meeting paper: Kleiman RLP, Hedin RS, Edenbom HM. 1991. Biological treatment of minewater—an overview. Paper presented at the Second International Conference on Abatement of Acid Drainage; 16–18 September 1991, Montreal, Canada.
- Online article: Palevitz BA. 2002. Designing science by politics. *The Scientist* 16 (11): 25. (1 April 2003; [www.the-scientist.com/yr2002/may/palevitz\\_p25\\_020527.html](http://www.the-scientist.com/yr2002/may/palevitz_p25_020527.html))

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## References cited

- [CBE] CBE Style Manual Committee. 1994. *Scientific Style and Format: The CBE Manual for Authors, Editors, and Publishers*. 6th ed. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- [Chicago] University of Chicago Press. 2003. *The Chicago Manual of Style*. 15th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Mish FC, et al., eds. 2003. *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*. 11th ed. Springfield (MA): Merriam-Webster.