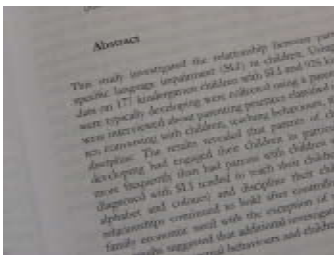


## MEMBERS AREA HINT SHEET

### 10 Tips for Writing an Effective Cover Letter (Initial Submissions)



The cover letter is the journal editor's first encounter with your manuscript. It is through your cover letter that you can state the novelty and importance of your findings as well as the reason why it merits publication. It is a great chance for you to distinguish your paper from the many other submissions that the journal editor has to read. Therefore, your cover letter must be written concisely and state clearly the implications of your findings as the centerpiece of the letter. Some of our tips below will help you do just that! We'll also provide you with a "template cover letter" to help you construct your own brief but convincing cover letter for initial submissions.

#### And now for the 10 tips...

- 1 Your cover letter must make a good first impression. Journal editors are busy people and receive thousands of submissions every year. Make it easy for them to do their job by writing a short, concise and convincing cover letter preparing them to read your work.
- 2 Never submit a manuscript to a target journal without including a cover letter—not only will you be missing an opportunity to catch the editor's attention to your work, but it is also expected that your submitted manuscript will be accompanied by such a letter. Your cover letter can be written in the form of a traditional "letter" prepared in a Word file. When submitting your manuscript via the journal's online submission system, you can either upload the letter as a Word file or simply copy & paste the text into a dedicated area.
- 3 Specify the name and title of the Editor-in-Chief of the journal, and the journal's name before beginning your letter. This information should be available on the journal's website or in a recent copy of the journal. Such attention to detail will show your commitment to submitting to the particular journal and the care you have taken in preparing your submission.
- 4 Read the target journal's Guidelines for Authors before making your cover letter. Remember that every journal is different. Some journals require specific information to be included in the cover letter or certain phrases to be used. **Nature** has highly specific guidelines regarding the information that must be included in the cover letter; for example, authors should state in a cover letter the number of words of text in the paper and that letter should contain two (100-word or shorter) summaries:  
<http://www.nature.com/nature/authors/submissions/subs/index.html#a6>.

- 5 In your cover letter, state clearly what type of manuscript you are submitting, using the journal's own submission type names if any. For example, some journals refer to "Original Articles" whereas others refer to "Regular Papers". Check this information in the Guidelines for Authors.
- 6 In the first paragraph of your letter include the title of your paper, the authors' names and type of submission. If you are submitting more than one file, list each part of the submission; for example, "There are three files in all: the main manuscript file, a Figures file (containing 4 figures) and a Tables file (containing 2 tables).
- 7 Avoid long descriptions of your paper and its merits. Instead summarize your findings and state concisely their relevance and application in one paragraph. A good rule of thumb is to keep it to one paragraph whenever possible.
- 8 Pay special attention to grammar, spelling and neatness of the cover letter. The overall professionalism of your cover letter will help the journal editor to view your paper as a high-level manuscript even before he or she reads or scans the paper itself. Consider asking your editor to create or check your draft cover letter for you to ensure you make a good first impression.
- 9 Typically you should provide a statement that the manuscript has neither been published before nor is being considered for publication elsewhere, and a statement that all authors have contributed equally to the work, and have read and agree to the submission of the paper to the target journal.
- 10 Include your full contact information without errors: your email address, complete address, phone and fax numbers so that the editor can contact you easily.

As you can see, submitting an effective cover letter is vitally important to making a good first impression with the journal editor and stating convincingly why you consider your paper will be of interest to the readers of the target journal. The care you take in preparing your letter, in terms of including all of the required content and in making the letter error-free, shows respect for the journal editor and makes his or her job easier.

We hope this hint sheet has been helpful.

## Cover Letter Template

Please feel free to use the following template as a base for initial submissions. However, ensure that you include any additional information stipulated by the target journal (check the Guidelines for Authors). Your editor will be happy to check your draft to ensure it is error-free and that it explains your research in the best light.

To create the initial draft of your cover letter, fill in the blank spaces below. If you would like the draft in a Word file, please contact us and we would be happy to send it to you by email.

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Dear Editor **[[if possible replace "Editor" with the journal editor's title and last name (e.g., Professor Smith)]]**:

We hereby submit a manuscript entitled "xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx" by author name(s) to be considered for publication as **[[an original article/ a research article/ a review/ a case report... State the type of paper as stated in the guidelines or delete all text within the square brackets]]** in Journal name. **[[There are three files in all: the main manuscript file, 1 Figures file (containing 4 figures) and 1 Tables file (containing 2 tables). Consider including this sentence if you have more than file, and revise the description as necessary]]**

This article **[[demonstrates/shows/reveals... State the most important aspects of your research]]**. We believe these findings will be of interest to the readers of your journal.

We declare that this manuscript is original, has not been published before and is not currently being considered for publication elsewhere.

### OPTIONAL PARAGRAPH

We wish to confirm that there are no known conflicts of interest associated with this publication and there has been no significant financial support for this work that could have influenced its outcome. The manuscript has been read and approved by all named authors.

We hope you find our manuscript suitable for publication and look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Your name

Your title

Your affiliation