

From Idea to Article: The Process

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Post Url

<https://www.enago.com/academy/from-idea-to-article-the-process/>

Writing a journal article requires many of the same steps it takes to write a dissertation, just on a different scale. However, there are a few key steps that differ between the two. This post will give you an overview of what those steps are.

Pre-Research

Whatever process you use to develop a topic, to read the appropriate literature, and to prepare your research plan, when creating a longer project will be essentially the same process for writing an article. However, you must take an extra step at this point when writing an article: [identify a few possible journals](#) to which you can submit your [article](#).

To do this, pick three of the main themes of your topic. Then, identify one or two journals that are appropriate for that specific topic. For example, I recently began writing an article on one particular midwife in Chicago in the 1920s. My three main themes are: medical history, Chicago history, and women's history; so, I identified one journal in each of those fields. Also, add one or two general journals in your broader field.

Now that you have a list of the journals to which you could potentially submit your article, make an informational reference page for each journal. Take notes all formatting and submission requirements for each journal, then decide if there are any journals to which you will not apply.

Now, it's time to research and write. Write your article with the shortest maximum length requirement. If it's 8000 words and another journal's maximum is 10,000 words, that's ok, but going over the limit is NOT ok. Do check each journal, but usually citations do not count toward the word limit.

If you have images, check submission format requirements (pdf, email, etc.), and get the correct rights and acknowledgments. If you did not create the image yourself, you generally need to contact the archives where you found the image.

Now, select your number one journal choice. Remember that you can only submit to one journal at a time! Many journals will ban you from publishing with them for life if they

discover you've submitted your work to another journal while the first journal is reviewing your work. Then: [submit!](#)

Eventually, you will probably receive one of four responses: rejected, accepted, accepted with revisions, revisions and revisit. If you are offered a chance to do revisions, do as much as you can and re-submit. You will then generally either get a rejection or acceptance. If you are rejected, move onto another journal choice. Reformat and resubmit.

If your article is accepted, at some point you'll probably get a manuscript marked up by a professional editor (it can take months for this to happen). **BE SURE TO CHECK THIS DOCUMENT.** The editor may not be a specialist in your field and may have missed something or changed something that should've been left as is. When you send it back, it will normally be the last time you have a chance to fix anything.

And now you wait. A few months later, you'll be a published author!

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