

## Guide for Authors.

Thank you for your interest in writing for the Economics Observatory. This document will hopefully give you a brief overview of the Observatory and some guidance on our writing style. Please read to the end as it includes important information on what to send with your article.

Our website ([www.economicsobservatory.com](http://www.economicsobservatory.com)) is also a useful resource to read examples of previous articles.

### About us

The Economics Observatory (ECO) is a new project that bridges the gap between academic research, government policy and the general public. Our goal is to provide balanced, accessible and reliable answers to the economic questions raised by challenges from Covid-19 to inequality and climate change.

### Readership and website information:

- Around 3,500 average daily page views on the website.
- Over 75,000 users visit the website each month.
- Individual ECO articles receive, on average, 850 page views within three weeks of being posted.
- Articles are promoted via the ECO Twitter account ([@EconObservatory](https://twitter.com/EconObservatory)), which currently has over 4,200 followers.
- ECO articles have been cited by media outlets such as the *Financial Times* and *The Independent*, as well within numerous government policy briefs and parliamentary libraries.

### Article structure

- Contributions should be around 1,500 words (but can vary from 1,000-2,000).
- Title – this must be a short and clear question of 100 characters including spaces at most.
- A teaser paragraph to give a little more detail than is in the title – no more than 300 characters or up to three lines.
- The first paragraph of the main text should succinctly summarise the answer to the question (not state a series of questions). This can include explaining that we don't know some things. It should include some important numbers/facts relevant to the topic, but not contain any references.
- Use subheadings to divide up the article. These should ideally be posed as questions or statements.

- Sub-sections should be divided up by questions or statements. Pieces will vary but sub-headings could include:
  - What does evidence from economic research tell us? Summarising the research evidence in a series of bullet points or short sentences (perhaps with an informative chart or table).
  - How reliable is the evidence? Discussing the reliability of the evidence (where appropriate, acknowledging contentious areas or issues on which evidence is weak).
  - What else do we need to know? Indicating what further research is going on/work in progress.
  - Where can I find out more? Provide links to other accessible materials where the reader can learn more about the topic (short accessible explainers, blogs, policy briefs, summaries, e.g. on Vox, LSE blogs, The Conversation, research institutions' own blogs, etc.). Please write these the title of the piece with a hyperlink to where it can be found, followed by a sentence explaining what the piece does, e.g. A. Jones and B. Smith explore....
  - Who are (economic) experts on this question? Listing experts, mostly but not exclusively in the UK, on the question. The website will have a directory of experts (we will write to each expert asking for their details).
- The format of the articles is flexible within reason so if you think something slightly different would work then please make suggestions. For example, some questions might simply explain how something works (such as quantitative easing) or how basic economic principles can be used to think about a phenomenon (e.g. price gouging).

### Style and formatting

- A contribution should directly answer a question that policy-makers or the general public have – it should not be a report on a piece of research.
- Articles should include numbers/facts/details, (e.g. if you are talking about unemployment increasing, the piece should tell us that it went from x% in 2019 to y% in 2020, which means z number of jobs were lost; or if you're writing about policies to reduce inequality, tell us what those policies are and who they're designed to help).
- Do not only talk about your own research; represent the entire economics profession.
- Include charts if useful and links to videos if relevant. Please include data for the chart – either in Excel/csv or share a link to the source – and add the source underneath it.
- Write for a non-specialist audience – use accessible language and style (e.g. rather than talking about firms in the food sector, tell us about restaurants and cafes; or explain that fiscal policy refers to taxes and government spending).
- Use short sentences and put subordinate clauses at the end of the sentence.
- Don't clear your throat with a lot of background on the topic of the crisis, get straight into answering the question.
- Within the body of the article (after the opening paragraph):
  - Give a bit more detail on what the research shows.

- Discuss the quality of the evidence, is it based on a long literature with robust methods, are there different results in the literature and no real consensus, etc.
  - Talk about what existing research is in progress, if there is any, or what we need to be doing (e.g. we require a certain type of data to answer the question...)
- Include references as hyperlinks at the end of sentences (e.g. ‘One study finds that .. (Smith and Jones, 2019)’ rather than ‘Smith and Jones (2019) find that...’)
- No footnotes.
- Avoid referring to ‘the literature’ – this means novels to non-academics.
- Refer to research/study/report rather than work/paper – again, these are academic words to many readers.
- What’s not allowed?
  - ‘However’ at the start of a sentence
  - ‘Moreover’
  - ‘Impact’ when used as a verb
- Ideally, use the present tense when referring to research (e.g. one study finds, not one study found).
- Use % not percent or per cent.

#### Other useful resources

- In addition to looking at existing articles on the ECO website, material the Communicating Economics website might also offer useful guidance on how to pitch your piece effectively to a non-specialist audience (<https://www.communicatingeconomics.com/tools/audience-policy-makers>).

#### What to send with your article?

- Data for any charts (Excel/csv files/link to source) as we will recreate these within the website.
- Information to create your author profile on the website (please also ask any co-authors to send this too):
  - Preferred name;
  - Institutional affiliation;
  - URL of personal page on institutional website;
  - A photo of good quality and at least 1000 pixels wide, ideally in close up;
  - A short biography (strictly 500 character maximum, including spaces) that highlights areas of expertise.

#### Contact

If you have any queries on the above or the Economics Observatory, please don’t hesitate to contact either Ashley Lait ([ashley.lait@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:ashley.lait@bristol.ac.uk)) or Charlie Meyrick ([charlie.meyrick@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:charlie.meyrick@bristol.ac.uk)).