Scientific Paper Step 4: Nearly-submittable draft

Congratulations on finishing step 3! You are now into the major work of the paper, which is converting the outline to a nearly submittable draft.

- A "nearly submittable draft" is a full paper draft that may not yet meet your internal quality standards, but it is something that could in theory be submitted for publication without much additional work.
- To be clear - you may want to polish your text more, round out your literature review, or make more visually attractive figures. But at this stage, you are aiming for "good enough" and should mostly stop there. There will be time to polish beyond this level later.
- Note that submittable applies to references and citations at this stage as well. You will add formal citations in this stage. These citations should be complete enough for submission; you can add notes regarding other citations you may want to look up later in case new information comes in.

Step 4 usually takes a little bit longer than Step 3, but can usually be completed in within a week. If it takes much longer than that, it's a sign that Step 4 is premature.

After finishing this step, it is a good idea to collect feedback before final polishing.

When answering the questions in this form, use plain, conversational language - short, simple sentences are preferred!

More information: https://github.com/computron/scientific-paper-flow

* Indicates required question

1.

Email *

Tips for Step 4

The nearly submittable draft is somewhat magical because halfway through this step, any stress you may have had about the paper will start to disappear because you know that your paper is going to make it. You're

not finished, but you know you *will* finish, and that's a big win for motivation. So remember that as you go through this step.

The biggest challenge of step 4 is that it can be time-consuming. Every bullet point you put in step 3 needs to be turned into a paragraph with references. For a single bullet, this might anywhere from 10 minutes to an hour. And since you had 25 - 40 bullets in your outline, this might end up being a dozen or more hours of work.

If you start to lose momentum in this step, here are a few tips:

- Remember to consider parallelization. If the task is daunting, split this step amongst several co-authors.
- Do not worry about your text being poetry. For now, you don't want perfect, you want "submittable" (good enough). You'll polish later to your quality standards.
- Instead of getting sidetracked (e.g., looking up new extra citations), use notes to remind yourself about other ideas and references to follow up on. You can color these notes, use comments, etc. Again, you will go back later.
- Convert bullet points to text in the following order: Methods, Results, Intro, Discussion, Conclusion, Abstract. Once a bullet point is submittable, stop and move on.
- Remember - as long as you keep going and making progress, you *will* finish!

2.

Please attach your paper which can in principle be submitted with only minor changes to one of your chosen journals (from Step 1).
Attach your nearly submittable draft. Please include the Supporting Information file also if it is present.

Note that you may still desire to make improvements to the paper, but this version should essentially be submittable as-is to a journal or to a preprint server with minor or no further changes.

Files submitted:

3.

What changes (if any) would you want to make to the paper at this stage?
Please provide a time estimate for each of these improvements.

This could be changes you feel would improve the quality, impact, precision, or academic rigor of results of the paper.

[max 2000 characters]

4.

List ways in which collaborators of the paper may assist with unfinished items.

For example, if your draft has notes on things to further polish, citations to look up, or additional tests to perform, perhaps a collaborator can help with this.

[max: 1000 characters]
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5.

Should this version of the paper now be sent to all collaborating authors for their review?
If not, please provide a timeline for when the manuscript will be in good enough shape to send for internal reviews.

[max 1000 characters]
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