

Reading Well - Journals



When does one choose a journal?

Early!

- Before drafting Introduction/Discussion.
- Likely while drafting Results.
- Two reasons for early choice:
 - You can't choose your story unless you know who you're telling it to.
 - No sense wasting effort violating *Instructions to Authors*
- Don't choose just one journal - think about 2 or 3.

Considerations in journal choice (1)

A) Audience

- What audience suits your story? (should your nonlinear theory paper go in *Physical Review* or in *Chaos*)?
- Keyword alerts, online searches make this matter less than it used to; but people still look to subject journals.

B) Fit

- Journals have “scope” they’re looking to publish. If you send your straight-up-physics paper to *JGR* you’ll get a quick rejection.
- Check web page, *Instructions to Authors*, or browse issues.
- Exceptions: “megajournals” like PLoS One.

Considerations in journal choice (2)

C) Your CV

- Are you building a reputation as a basic-science physicist? Or a nuclear physicist?
- Do you want to impress search committees? Consider journal reputation and – as a shortcut – impact factor (**caution!**)
- Journal Impact Factor: citations in year X of papers in years X-1, X-2.

Considerations in journal choice (2)

GENERAL SCIENCE JOURNALS IMPACT FACTORS

There are only a handful of general science journals. Britain and the United States founded Nature and Science, and their respective science academies issue their proceedings.

Nature 38.597 (2012)

Nature communications 10.015 (2012)

Scientific Reports 2.927 (2012)

Scientific American 1.478 (2012)

Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences 9.737 (2012)

Proceedings of the Royal Society

A: Mathematical, Physical and Engineering Sciences 2.378 (2012)

B: Biological Sciences 5.683 (2012)

Science 31.030 (2012)

Considerations in journal choice (2)

PHYSICS JOURNALS IMPACT FACTORS

Nature Physics 19.352 (2012)

Physical Review Letter 7.943 (2012)

Physical Review (2012):

A: 3.042

B: 3.767

C: 3.715

D: 4.691

E: 2.313

PHYS OC JOURNALS IMPACT FACTORS

Journal of Fluid Mechanics 2.82 (2016)

Journal of Physical Oceanography 2.345 (2011)

Geophys. Research Letters 4.253 (2016)

Considerations in journal choice (3)

D) Open-access vs. subscription (“paywall”)

- Many people have **very** strong opinions about this!
(*“All science should be publicly available”*)
- “Paywalled” papers are not quite as inaccessible as OA advocates argue
- Many subscription journals have an OA option (but \$\$)

E) Cost

- Open-access “Article Processing Charge” vs. subscription “Page Charges”
- Anywhere from \$100 to \$5,000!
- Some free journals exist. Others have waiver programs for early-career authors, authors without grant funds, or 3rd-world authors.

Considerations in journal choice (4)

F) Society vs. for-profit

- The big for-profit conglomerates: Elsevier, Springer, Wiley-Blackwell, Sage, Taylor & Francis (>50% of all papers).
- Society journals: normally non-profit *or* support the society.

G) Speed

- Some journals promise fast decisions (30 days or less).
- Generally: please don't encourage journals that compete on speed. (exceptions possible near early-career deadlines)
- ~3 months to first decision is typical and appropriate.

Considerations in journal choice (5)

H) Avoid predatory/fake journals

- These journals pretend to peer-review but will publish **anything** for payment.
- Nobody reads these. Nobody savvy takes these seriously.

[Let's get published](#)

How do you recognize a journal as fake?

- If they e-mail you asking you to submit (unless you know the sender)
- If their web site is unprofessional, typo-laden
- If they hide the APC cost
- If they offer ludicrously fast publication (days to weeks)
- If they're listed on "Beall's List" (google it; it moves)
- If your colleagues don't recognize it

Today's workshop

(1) Start reading journal articles provided

(2) Be prepared to discuss next lecture

Some discussion points:

- Did the article seem provocative?
- Did it flow?
- Does it have a story?
- Did the figures add to the story?

What did you do?
Why did you do it?
How did you do it?
What did you find?
What does it mean?