

UC Santa Cruz

Publishing Tips Series Season 2

Title

Season 2, Week 1 - Where do I even start with publishing an article?

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/4r0316tw>

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Publication Date

2025-10-23

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Publishing Tips Series – Season 2, Week 1

October 23, 2025

This is the first week of the Publishing Tips Series, Season 2, and this second season runs from October 23 to December 4, 2025. This week's episode covers **"Where do I even start with publishing an article?"** Here are this week's takeaways:

- Consider whether you have an idea for an article or not, which will inform your next steps.
- Steps can include finding a topic, familiarizing yourself with the sections of an article, and finding a journal.

Spotify link to listen

[Season 2, Week 1 podcast episode](#) (same content as the following text-based version, only in audio format)

Where do I even start with publishing an article?

First things first, welcome to Season 2! This is Martha Stuit (she/her), a librarian in McHenry Library at UCSC and past managing editor of the *Journal of Librarianship and Scholarly Communication*. Throughout Season 2, I will be available to contact by email at research@library.ucsc.edu. Each week, I will answer a question about publishing and offer things you may read and/or put into practice.

In our library survey of graduate students on publishing, one student said, "I'm very nervous and anxious about the whole publishing thing." This Publishing Tips Series aims to address that with this week's question – where do I even start with publishing an article?!

The publishing process for an article involves many tasks, some of which are in your hands and some of which are the responsibility of others. Before you embark on those tasks as an author, it helps to know what you will write about, where to submit, and more.

Consider these questions to get started:

Are you early in your research and need to identify a topic?

If so, read the literature in your area to find out if there are gaps in knowledge that your research could address or that you are interested in studying further. Talking with researchers in the field (e.g., professors and other grad students) will also help you gain a sense of what is currently going on in the field, and you may run your potential topics by them, too. Hopefully these activities will spark some ideas!

Do you have results that you are ready to write about? This question/approach also works if you are still in the finding-a-research-idea phase:

Review the standard sections of a research article (e.g., introduction, methods, results, discussion, etc.) so that you know what information to include in each section.

While there can be variations across fields and journals, each section of a research article generally covers similar details that reviewers and readers need to know about your work. For example, the introduction typically gives background about the area of study and the need for/value of the research. Knowing the standard content of article sections will help your writing go more smoothly when you are composing each section of your article.

Also, if you have a journal in mind where you may submit your article, you may look at their manuscript preparation instructions (also called author guidelines, section policies, etc.) for guidance on which article sections to include (note that some journals have additional sections, like implications), which citation style to use, and other components of an article. That brings us to the next question to consider.

Have you already determined your intended audience? If so, it's time to find a journal!

...and you may also identify your audience as you search for a journal if you haven't already. Look for a journal whose scope encompasses your research and reaches readers in your field. Journals typically have aims & scope statements that describe what area(s) of research that they publish about. Reading the journal's scope on its website and then making sure your article aligns with it is crucial to being considered at all by the journal. If your article isn't covered by the scope, look for another journal. Also, browse who is publishing in the journal and the journal's social media (if any) to see if it gives you clues as to who reads the journal – in other words, your audience.

You may be aiming to communicate your research to a discipline-specific audience, or you may be trying to reach readers in multiple disciplines. Either way, check out journals that you

frequently cite or read, and you can also scroll through library databases in your field to see what journals are indexed there. Not familiar with any databases? Reach out to the Library to ask and/or [set up an appointment](#) to meet with a librarian on Zoom to look together!

See the [second episode of this series' first season](#) for more on finding a journal, too.

Whether discipline-specific or interdisciplinary, find the submission guidelines for your journal of choice, as mentioned earlier, and format your manuscript accordingly as you write it, which will save you the time of doing so later once you are ready to submit.

Lastly, what is your publishing strategy?

It is unlikely that you have one when you are starting out, and that is okay! As you advance in your program, you may begin to think about what areas of your research you would like to publish, how many articles you want to publish during your program, when you will write them, if you may eventually write a book (as some of you mentioned when you signed up!), and more. In the last week of Season 2, we will talk in more detail about developing a plan for publishing articles during graduate school.

Putting it into practice

Each week we will have a few things to read or try. For this week:

1. The last chapter in Wendy Belcher's book, [Writing Your Journal Article in Twelve Weeks](#), is called "Week 0: Writing Your Journal Article from Scratch." Read this chapter for more insights on how to approach publishing from the very beginning, such as how to test out your ideas.
2. Consider the criteria for choosing a journal in this [ebook chapter on a "Publishing Plan"](#) (you don't have to write a paper like it says, just read the bullet points), or check out the criteria on the [webpage about journals from Think. Check. Submit](#) (they also have a [guide about books and chapters!](#)).

More questions? Contact the Library at research@library.ucsc.edu or [sign up](#) for a one-on-one Zoom meeting about publishing.

Next week's installment will share a story of a student as they choose a journal and publisher and interact with both throughout the publishing process.

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