
Publishing high-impact findings quickly



High-impact, important research findings often deserve to be shared rapidly. The article type typically known as short, brief, or rapid communications is an option for authors who want to share their results in short form with the research community, often rapidly—as the name “rapid communications” suggests. (In some cases, publication of short papers is not rapid, as explained below.)

So, when should we opt to write a brief communications article?

What are the advantages of sharing our results quickly with the community via this type of article instead of sharing them via a conference presentation, uploading a paper to a pre-print server, or writing a longer original article?

Here, we'll look at the advantages of writing short articles and important considerations to verify whether the short type is the best choice for the research you currently have.

1. Features and advantages of writing short/brief/rapid communication papers

- **Short:** The research findings will be of substantial interest to a wide community or to a highly specialist community (and which of these best fits your case determines which target journal to choose)
- **Brief:** Often only the most interesting or salient points are mentioned, with full details of your work to follow in a later paper
- **Rapid:** In some journals, the peer-review process is either sped up or replaced by editorial review

Let's look at the different features for some publications.

2. Some examples from specific journals

Lancet: [Correspondence](#)

Correspondence is a very brief letter about a topic of general interest (up to 400 words) or commentary on a recently published article in the journal (250 words; no more than 2 weeks after the article's publication). These are not usually peer-reviewed. You may discuss your support of the published findings by referring to your preliminary data from an ongoing study or an unpublished article at this stage, or you may caution against the implications or rigorosity of the published study.

Science Magazine: [Letters](#)

These discuss work that is broadly interesting or was published within the prior 3 issues. These are up to 300 words and might be peer-reviewed.

The American Mathematical Monthly: [Notes](#)

“Notes are short, sharply focused, and possibly informal.” These are intended to stimulate discussion or provide something interesting to readers, “and even entertain.” They are peer-reviewed if novel, but chosen mainly for clarity.

Information and Software Technology: [Short Communications](#)

This journal publishes research in the specific field of information and software technology and its short communications are to “quickly disseminate novel and impactful results.” These papers are up to about 4 pages and they have a quicker peer-review process, with a final decision made within 4 weeks.

Advanced Structural and Chemical Imaging: [Brief Communications](#)

These are articles in a highly specialized field. They are not necessarily standard research papers but would be of interest to the journal’s readers or they provide a substantial re-analysis of a previously published article in this or another journal that would be of interest to ASCI’s readers. These may be peer-reviewed, at the discretion of the editor, and may be edited for length.

3. Other article options and important considerations

Because of their brevity, this type of submission is typically concise and relies heavily on shared knowledge among readers of the journal. This requires a concise writing style that must also report your findings or opinion clearly and accurately, and in an appropriate tone for the journal.

Some journals publish these more rapidly than other types of submissions. Others go through the normal process and have the same speed of publication.

Check the journal guidelines carefully. Some journals require checking with the journal editor before sending a short communication—others ask that authors please *not* check before sending one. The guidelines will be your best source of information for the particulars of a journal.

Letters to the editor

In some journals, “Letters to the editor” overlap with other types of brief communication. Some journals accept letters about preliminary findings of substantial interest and others do not.

Letters and other manuscript types in the correspondence category are usually about points of interest (commentaries) for the community of readers or comments on articles previously published in that particular journal, along with the response to those comments.

We’ll discuss key points about writing letters to the editor in a later featured article.

Pre-print servers

Common to certain fields (most notably, mathematics and physics), these can help to establish priority, which is especially helpful in priority disputes in technology fields, and also allow helpful feedback from peers in advance of publication.

Not all journals will accept papers that have been submitted to a pre-print service, so if you are planning to submit a full-length paper on your findings in the future, check whether your potential target journals allow it before uploading your paper to the pre-print server. Some journals have specific exceptions for well-known repositories (such as [ArXiv](#)).

We'll cover the topic of using pre-print servers in a more detailed forthcoming featured article.

Conference presentations

Some fields (computer science, in particular) use conferences as the main form of publication. In these, the equivalent to a brief note is presentation of an abstract without presentation of the full paper. Presentation and publication of abstracts at conferences and meetings is not considered prior publication. To comply with the latest publication ethics, we simply need to declare that it was presented or published in this format and provide the information to the journal editor when submitting our full paper.

Fast-track full papers

Some journals offer fast-track publication of full papers. This is an alternative for researchers wanting to have a full research paper published quickly.

Summary

Not all research benefits from publication in a shortened form. If your research is, like most research, building slowly and methodically on known results and existing work, you will probably want to publish a full research article via the conventional process.

Some research, however, is of such immediate benefit to the research community that it warrants considering how to disseminate it more rapidly and/or in an abbreviated form.

To make the most of your research and writing time, choose carefully according to your publication and information dissemination needs (e.g., speed of publication, later publication of a full research article) and conventions for publishing in your field.

If you're unsure whether to publish in full or in brief, we can help you decide. Because we handle thousands of papers a year, we can see both the novel parts of your research and how it fits within your overall field.

Because of their brevity, brief communications can pose difficulties for remaining concise, clear, and accurate. Keeping the balance between these three aspects is crucial here. Our [specialist translators and editors](#) can provide [support and advice](#) on the content in addition to our core service of manuscript [translation and editing](#).

Please [contact us](#) for assistance. We're always happy to help.