

PART 3:

Publication process and reviews

Writing style

- **Use plain English:** no jargon, no elaborate phrases
- Each paragraph needs a **defined topic**
 - topic sentences, e.g.:
 - *“The mortality of beetles in control did not exceed 10%. The initial body mass of female beetles (0.0590 g) was significantly higher than that of male beetles (0.0537 g) ($p < 0.0001$), with no significant differences between the temperatures to which they were assigned ($p = 0.9$).”*
 - *“At the end of experiment, Ni levels in the beetles were much higher than at the beginning of the experiment at all temperatures ($p < 0.03$; Table 3)...”*

A. J. Bednarska, A. Brzeska, R. Laskowski (2011) Two-phase uptake of nickel in the ground beetle *Pterostichus oblongopunctatus* (Coleoptera: Carabidae): Implications for invertebrate metal kinetics, Archives of Environmental Contamination and Toxicology, 60: 722-733.

Writing style

- **Short sentences**
- Simple structure: **subject** – **verb** – **object**
 - “The results of statistical analyses (Table 1), together with graphs shown in Fig. 1, clearly indicate that the classic two-phase model does not really fit to the data.”
 - “A detailed and formal comparison of the models indicated that the highest R_{adj}^2 and the lowest AIC values were obtained for the three-phase model with estimated breakpoint...”

R. Laskowski, A. J. Bednarska, D. J. Spurgeon, C. Svendsen, C. A. M. van Gestel (2010) Three-phase metal kinetics in terrestrial invertebrates exposed to high metal concentrations. *The Science of the Total Environment*, 408: 3794-802.

Preparing manuscript: final touch

- **Follow journal's Instructions for Authors!**
- Page: A4 or Letter, all margins 2.5 cm (1")
- Separate title page: title, authors, addresses
- Numbered pages and lines (*preferred continuous line numbering*)
- Text left-justified, double-spaced, Times 10-12 p.
- No hyphenation
- No orphans and widows
- Each section starts on a new page
- Separate paragraphs for each topic

Submitting the manuscript: letter to the editor

Dear Editor,

Attached please find a paper entitled 'Decreased functional diversity of soil microbial communities in soils polluted with metals'. We would be grateful if you consider it for publication in your journal. We believe that the study is quite unique as it is based on four different pollution gradients, located in two countries and polluted with different mixtures of metals.

The data reported in this manuscript have not been published earlier, and the manuscript is not under consideration for another journal. All authors have approved this version for submission.

Yours sincerely,

.....

TAKE-HOME SUMMARY

- Be brief and accurate throughout the manuscript
- Be extremely precise in describing the methods
- Describe the results as clearly as possible, focusing on those most important for the hypothesis tested and aims of the study
- Do not be tempted to see in the data what is not there (what you cannot prove)
- Limit the number of tables AND figures to ca. six
- Comply with “Instructions to authors” in every detail

Where to publish: selecting the journal

- **Publish your work in the best journal you can!**

BUT:

- Your article **MUST** fit perfectly to the journal profile
- The article has to follow one of the forms accepted by the journal (e.g., extensive research paper, short communication, review paper)
- The quality of your work must meet the journal status

How to know what is “the best journal”?



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Select Journals

Select Categories

Select JCR Year

2018

Select Edition

SCIE SSCI

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Open Access

Category Schema

Web of Science

Journals By Rank

Categories By Rank

Journal Titles Ranked by Impact Factor

Compare Selected Journals

Add Journals to New or Existing List

Customize Indicators

Select All		Full Journal Title	Total Cites	Journal Impact Factor	Eigenfactor Score
<input type="checkbox"/>	1	Energy & Environmental Science	81,176	33.250	0.16014
<input type="checkbox"/>	2	Nature Climate Change	23,544	21.722	0.09810
<input type="checkbox"/>	3	FRONTIERS IN ECOLOGY AND THE ENVIRONMENT	10,483	10.935	0.01529
<input type="checkbox"/>	4	GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE-HUMAN AND POLICY DIMENSIONS	17,370	10.427	0.03025
<input type="checkbox"/>	5	GLOBAL CHANGE BIOLOGY	42,119	8.880	
<input type="checkbox"/>	6	Annual Review of Environment and Resources	4,214	8.617	
<input type="checkbox"/>	7	REMOTE SENSING OF ENVIRONMENT	54,482	8.218	
<input type="checkbox"/>	8	ENVIRONMENT INTERNATIONAL	23,409	7.943	0.03144
<input type="checkbox"/>	9	WATER RESEARCH	87,258	7.913	0.07551

Out of 251 in Environmental science

JCR: impact factors, half-life, etc...

- **Journal Impact Factor**

- the average number of times articles from the journal published in the past two years have been cited in the JCR year

- **5-Year Journal Impact Factor**

- the average number of times articles from the journal published in the past five years have been cited in the JCR year

- **Journal Cited Half-Life**

- The median age of the articles that were cited in the JCR year

- **Balance between journal rank and acceptance ratio**

Ethics in science

- Fraud:
 - intentional deception, deliberate trickery intended to gain an advantage
- Multiple publication
 - never ever publish the same article more than once!
 - using the same data in different papers?
- Authorship
 - no „gift authorships”!
 - all collaborators with significant scientific input should be coauthors

Review process

- Peer review – what does it mean and is it important?
- It takes ca. 2-4 months to receive a review
 - be patient (but not over 4 months – a polite reminder to the editor can help)
- Acceptance ratio: best journals accept only a small proportion of the submitted manuscripts (10-30%)
- It almost never happens to have a paper accepted without any revisions
- You can always withdraw your manuscript from a journal

How to deal with a review?

- Never get angry at the review or reviewers – this does not help! Positive attitude is the key!
- If a reviewer does not understand parts of your paper, this is probably *your* fault. In 90% cases reviewers are right.
- Go through the review and make all simple corrections first.
- Then, concentrate on more serious issues.
- Incorporate all sensible suggested changes.
- Rebut those, where the reviewer was wrong.

After the review

1. Prepare clean revised manuscript
2. Letter to the editor: brief summary of the revisions
3. Detailed list of changes and rebuttals
 - copy ALL suggestions made by reviewers and comment each one:
 - if simply accepted – ‘Done’
 - if more elaborate changes – detail them and indicate respective place in the revised manuscript (page, line)
 - In case of rejection:
 1. use the reviews anyway to improve the manuscript
 2. go for another journal

Proofreading:

Your last work on the accepted manuscript

- More difficult task than you think
- Do not neglect it – this is your last chance to make corrections (publishing papers with typos, mistaken numbers, etc. doesn't build good reputation!)
- There are standard RULES of marking corrections on proofs: do not invent yours!
 - frequently can be found on publishers' websites
 - for general rules, see complementary materials
- Be fast: the publisher will not wait for your work

Reviewing others' work

- Peer review is your duty!
- Assuring good science is the prime reason
- It allows to shape your field
- Make the review in a way you would expect from others:
 - politeness – ALWAYS, no excuses!
 - constructiveness
 - encouragement – if justified
- Accept a paper for review only if:
 - you have enough expertise
 - there is no conflict of interest
 - you are able to complete the review in due time (2-3 w.)

Reviewer's tasks

- General recommendation:
 - Accept / Minor revision / Major revision / Reject
- Assessing scientific merits of the manuscript:
 - is the study up to date with contemporary knowledge
 - are the results new and important
 - is the study methodologically correct (experimental design, tools and methods used, etc.)
 - is the statistics correct
 - are the conclusions supported by the data and analyses
- Assessing quality of the manuscript itself
 - is the language good and the text easy to understand
 - are the tables and graphs of good quality, etc.

Homework

- Read the supplementary materials
 - ‘How to write a scientific article’ by:
 - Carpenter
 - Collier
 - Shubrook
 - www.sfeddit.net
 - reviews: ‘minor revision’, ‘major revision’, ‘rejection’
 - visit a couple of journal websites – see instructions for authors