

“A Beginner’s Guide to...” series - Instructions to Authors

Introduction to *The Biochemist*

The Biochemist is the magazine of the Biochemical Society, a learned society serving the molecular life science community and is published by Portland Press Ltd, the wholly owned publishing subsidiary of the Biochemical Society. All profits made by Portland Press Ltd are covenanted back to the Society, thereby enabling it to carry out its charitable objectives and to advance the interests of science at large.

The ‘A Beginner’s Guide to...’ Series

Have you ever had the experience of sitting in a seminar at which the speaker jumps into their discussion at a level which assumes that their audience has rather more prior knowledge about the techniques they are using? We are starting a new regular feature in *The Biochemist* (expected to be one article per issue) which we are calling **A beginner’s guide to...**

This is an ongoing series of feature articles in the magazine, each one covering a key technique and offering a beginner’s guide for the scientifically literate but not necessarily expert audience (if in doubt, assume that you are writing for a first-year undergraduate biochemist). The pieces are intended to give a background briefing on the underlying science of a technique that is (or will be) widely used in molecular bioscience. We aim to cover a mixture of techniques, including some that are well established amongst a subset of our readership (e.g. cell biologists) but not necessarily familiar to those in different specialisms (e.g. structural biology), or the reverse. Other methods may be relatively novel or may be finding new life after a period of time in the methodological wilderness.

As *The Biochemist* is a magazine rather than an academic journal, you are able to use more informal language and we are looking for content written in an interesting and accessible way that is appealing.

Preparing your beginner’s guide

Main Text

- The ideal feature article should be around 2000 words in length
- Please include short introduction summarising the article (around 100-150 words)
- Please include a summary ‘box’ following the introduction with a few bullet points outlining the method covered
- Please include a general overview of the technique and some examples of ways it has been or could be used
- Please include a section at the end of the article describing how the technique is being used in an area of cutting edge or emerging research
- Feel free to use subheading if you wish – they are a useful way of breaking up the text
- Please minimize the use of technical language and abbreviations
- Articles can be written using either American or British spelling conventions; however, these should be used consistently throughout the article.

Sources and further reading

- Please do not include references within the text, either parenthetically or as a numbered list (these will be removed to fit with house style for the magazine)
- Key references pertaining to your article should be included in a ‘Further reading’ section at the end of your article, ideally please include around 5-10 items that will be beneficial to readers interested in knowing more about the topic
- Given the nature of feature articles in *The Biochemist*, further reading might include academic research articles or reviews, articles published in the media and specialist media (for example, an article in the *New Scientist*), a government reports, a relevant website or article published on such a website, or a relevant blog article
- This can also include appropriately authoritative videos (in which case the section will be headed “Further Reading and Viewing”)

Figures and tables

- Great images can really complement the text of your feature, please include at least 1 figure or image. Ideally, we look for 4-5 images, these can be colour and any reasonable size
- Images and tables should ideally be original or should cite the original source in the figure legend

- If you wish to reuse a previously published image or table, please ensure that you either own the Copyright or have written permission to use any artwork, figures, illustrations or tables you wish to include from the Copyright owner (this is often the publisher)
- Images should be high-resolution (300 dpi) JPEG, EPS TIFF or PDF files
- Please include a title for the figure, you can also include a legend, but this is optional
- Tables can be a useful way to summarize complex information, but we do ask that you use them sparingly. Their purpose in the feature should be to simplify and clarify and not to overcomplicate the subject
- Tables should be provided in Microsoft Word

Authors

- Please provide a brief paragraph (max 100 words) giving biographical details for each author
- This should be accompanied with a head-and-shoulders photograph of each author and each author's email address
- If you wish, feel free to involve one or two members of your team to co-write the article as part of their training in science communication, however it is very unusual for pieces to be written by more than three authors

Submitting your feature

When you are ready, please send your text as a Microsoft Word file and any figures or images attached to an email.

Please send your text to biochemist@biochemistry.org.

Submission checklist:

- Article text as a Word File, including
 - Summary
 - Further reading
 - Author biographies and headshots
- All image files attached separately (Illustrations embedded in a Microsoft Word text file are not high-enough resolution for production/printing)
- If you received a blank license to publish from upon agreeing to contribute to the magazine, please include a completed one with your feature

Further details

Articles submitted for publication should be received by the deadlines agreed with the editorial office, if an article be received late, although every effort will be made to include the article in the issue, however the Editor reserves the right to reschedule the article if this would delay the issue as a whole.

It is important that you contact us (biochemist@biochemistry.org or editorial@portlandpress.com) if you are having problems meeting this deadline, as we aim to be as flexible as possible and need to ensure our publication pipeline is up-to-date.

Following submission

On submission, your article will be sent to the Science Editor who ensures submitted articles meet a sufficient standard of scientific accuracy, overall quality and house style.

Please note that submission does not guarantee publication, your feature may be returned to you with guidance on possible revisions, or if deemed unsuitable for publication, we will liaise with you to source alternative options.

Following acceptance of the article, all articles will be copyedited and typeset, and you will receive proofs from our Production team. Proofs at this stage should be used to correct formatting errors only and are not an opportunity for major revision of the text. In order to ensure timely publication of the issue, corrected proofs must be returned by the date stated (usually within 3 working days of receipt).

Free copies

All feature authors will receive a print copy of the issue in which their article appears.

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