

Locating a Journal For Publication

While there are effective writing strategies that can be transferred across different documents and formats, advanced academic writing is often highly-contextual. This means that what constitutes effective or productive writing is contingent upon the standards, values, and best practices of particular research outlets and genres. Consequently, conducting reconnaissance on appropriate publication outlets is an important first step in the writing process. Put differently, knowing the publication outlets that would be appropriate venues for your research can help you refine the focus, scope, and structure of your writing.

The following questions are designed to help you conduct some preliminary reconnaissance on academic journals that would be a suitable fit for your research. Furthermore, conducting preliminary research on academic journals can help you return to your writing with a stronger sense of how you might revise your research in order to resonate with the conventions of a given academic community. Most importantly, be as specific as possible when answering the following questions. The more specific you are, the easier it will be to draft and revise your research.

1. Locate a peer-reviewed journal in your field that you think would be suitable for your current research.

Write down the title of the journal and any affiliations this journal has with professional organizations (if appropriate).

2. Read over the Mission Statement of this journal. Based on this Mission Statement, why do you think your research would be suitable for this journal?

For example, does this journal focus on qualitative research within institutional settings? Or, does this research emphasize applications of AI to professional/commercial scenarios?

3. Locate an article within this journal that engages with a topic, concept, or theoretical framework that you plan to use in your own research.

Write down the bibliographic information of this article (author name, title, volume/issue).

4. Scan through this article and identify the central theoretical framework or methodology the author uses in their research.

That is to say, what is the most important concept, keystone scholar, or process used in this article?

5. How does this theoretical framework or methodology function in terms of the author's central argument?

For example, does the author use a theoretical framework to diagnose the cause of a specific problem? Are they attempting to build upon the findings of a keystone scholar or text? Does the author use a certain methodology to measure the success of a given experiment?

6. Return to your own writing and identify one feature of your research that resonates with the observations you made in Question 4 or 5 above.

In other words, does your research use the same theoretical framework that is discussed in the article you located? Does your research touch upon the same issues or current events that are examined in article you located? Or, does your research have the same goals (i.e., diagnosing a problem) as the methods used in the article you located?

7. Return to your own writing and identify one potential disconnect or difference between your research and the article you located.

That is to say, how does your own research do something DIFFERENT from the article you located? Do you use a different theoretical framework? Do you discuss different types of evidence? Do you have different goals/aims for your research?

8. How might you revise your research that mitigates the disconnect or difference you identified in Question 7?

To clarify, this question is not asking you to fundamentally change your research in order to mimic the journal article you located. Instead, this question is calling attention to moments where you could make slight adjustments to your writing (such as re-sequencing key sections or even simply adding a footnote that makes reference to other scholarship) in order to better resonate with the conventions and theoretical frameworks that are prioritized by a given academic journal.