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Top 10 Tips on Writing for Professional Journals

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by Frank G. Houdek

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10. Write about a topic that you know something about: You should have something to say.
9. Write on a topic that interests you: Don't choose a topic because it is "hot." Choose it because you are passionate about it.
8. Familiarize yourself with the journal(s) to which you intend to submit your article:
 - Contact the editor early in the process.
 - Look at representative issues.
 - Pay attention to style sheets and author guidelines.
7. Know your audience: Who are you writing for and what are they interested in?
6. Know specifically, not generally, what it is you want to say before you start writing.
5. Pay careful attention to the organization of your article:
 - Use the introduction to "hook" the reader (but don't be so "clever" that the reader can't tell what the article is about).
 - Use the body to logically explain your argument(s) to the reader.
 - Use the conclusion to remind the reader of your main points (and don't introduce anything new for which you haven't already built a solid foundation).
4. Avoid using conclusive statements unless you provide adequate support (or make sure that such statements are clearly labeled as your "opinion" and are not put forth as "fact").
3. Mind the fine line between adequately emphasizing important points (the reader should know what you think) and verbosity (the reader should not be bored by unnecessary repetition).
2. Write with clarity, creativity and imagination. Ask yourself: "Would I read this to the end if I had not written it myself?"
1. Leave yourself plenty of time to revise and edit your submission — several times — before meeting a publication deadline. Let a "fresh," unbiased eye read and comment on the piece during this process. Try to take ego out of your reaction to what is said.

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