

Look for author instructions on the journal’s home page, which may be in a tab near the top or a link along the side or near the bottom of the page. Note that submission instructions are usually different from author instructions. Submission instructions include the platform for uploading your manuscript files, any publication fees, and other relevant information.

Common Features of Manuscripts

Schrank toured the common features of modern manuscripts, showing both organization and what information goes where. Journals do vary in placement for some information; here are common things to check:

- Information required on title page
- Specific subheadings for abstracts
- Acknowledgements section—thank contributors (eg, statisticians, medical writers)
- Source(s) of funding
- Conflicts of interest—sometimes duplicated

Dummy Submissions Allow Editors to Discover What the Journal Requires

If the target journal is known, start a dummy submission in the online portal using the login ID and password of the submitting author. Gathering all information and materials from your authors ahead of time will avoid delays when it is time to submit the manuscript. Once you start the dummy submission, read the instruction prompts carefully for any surprises (eg, a cover letter is required and authors have not written one).

Common information requested on submission:

- Email addresses for all authors
- Biography of each author
- Suggested peer reviewers and email addresses; some journals require it and want up to 3 names
- Conflicts of interest/wording of statement for no conflicts
- Open access fees (do authors know this and want to pay for it?)
- Summary Box/Key Messages of the research

Once the manuscript is submitted, it will follow 1 of 3 paths (Table), and some authors will also engage the editor in this phase.

Table. Three Paths of a Manuscript

Path	Role of the Editor
Accepted	<p>Read the article proofs carefully for issues introduced by the journal editors (eg, typos) and for behind-the-scenes comments that should have been removed</p> <p>Respond to queries/comments addressed to the authors</p> <p>Deter authors from requesting new revisions, as this could be costly (if it is allowed)</p>
Revise and Resubmit	<p>Ensure response letter is polite; thank the reviewers for suggestions (even if slightly off base)</p> <p>Help author pick the important battles; yield to suggestions and points when ethically possible</p> <p>Ensure that the revision is better, not worse, than the original text</p> <p>Explain to the reviewer what was changed and why</p> <p>Follow instructions for how the editor wants to see changes to the manuscript (eg, track changes visible, detailed cover letter)</p>
Rejected	<p>Submit to another journal</p> <p>Rework manuscript then submit elsewhere</p>

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1. Gawande A. *The Checklist Manifesto: How to Get Things Right*. Metropolitan Books; 2009.

WHERE DATA, DESIGN, AND TECHNOLOGY MEET: EFFECTIVE INFOGRAPHIC STRATEGIES FOR HEALTH COMMUNICATION

Speaker

Kathleen Walker, *Content Strategist, Communicate Health, Fort Worth, TX*

By Sunali Wadehra, MD

What is an Infographic, and Why are They Important?

An infographic is a graphic visual representation of information, data, or knowledge that is intended to present complex information *quickly and clearly*. Slick graphics and data visualization are used to engage the audience, and visual storytelling is used to convey a concept. A well-designed infographic helps people find what they need, understand what they find, and remember what they read. Note that not just any chart or graph qualifies as an infographic; it must represent this criterion.

What is the value of an infographic? Likely, they can reach and engage audiences in a way that health information becomes easier to understand than another media. An infographic is 30 times¹ more likely to be read than a text article because users are more likely to engage with content that is presented visually. In addition, people following directions with text and illustrations do 323%¹ better than people following directions without illustrations, so infographics are particularly effective in conveying information that requires users to act. In addition, infographics stand out from the crowd, are easy to share, and may be more cost-effective than other media.

An infographic may be used to present statistical data, provide how-to guides, describe processes, illustrate timelines, map trends, make comparisons, and organize facts. Note that how-to guides are especially valuable for low literacy populations, as visual elements can help facilitate their understanding. This approach is particularly effective when you test them on audiences to make sure the infographic conveys the right takeaways.

Did You Know That Infographics May Facilitate Health Literacy?

Did you know that about 9 in 10 people have limited health literacy? They too should be able to access health information, and infographics help to facilitate that. The best practices for creating infographics are aligned with several key health literacy principles. What are some examples of these principles?

- State the main message up front.
- Use common, familiar words.
- Use “1 in X” language. (eg, “1 in 5”)

Other recommendations specific to using infographics to promote health literacy include aiming for minimal text and using key messages, using images as cues to support understanding, and providing visual representations to help learners understand the meaning of data.

More Strategies, Tips, and Tricks

Writers and designers are key players in creating content and developing infographics. Those involved in the content development process—which should happen before the design process—should try to identify opportunities for the designer, whilst being open to their approaches. Even content designers sketch their visions out for the infographic. However, everyone else involved in the process should also understand its nuts and bolts to facilitate collaboration and communication. Here are 10 strategies for optimizing infographics:

1. **Start with an audience and a message.** This helps to hone in on the “why” and “how.” More specifically, determine your audience, objective, goals, and method of distribution.
2. **Find data.** For example, data can be gleaned from internal, government, academic, and/or research resources. Note that it is okay to start with more data than needed and pare down during the development process.
3. **Write a story—meaningfully.** What is the story that needs to be told? How can that story be supported with data? Is there a hero statistic that can be featured? A few strong pieces of data to back the story up can be advantageous, with the hero statistic acting as a single takeaway piece of data that is the centerpiece of the story.
4. **Look for visual opportunities.** Evaluate the content and consider how the story can be conveyed through visualizations, including data that can be designed or content that can be reinforced with an icon. Also, use positive visualization when possible. For example, when designing an infographic about outdoor air quality, consider presenting someone exercising indoors.
5. **Be creative.** Consider questions such as, “Can I add an accompanying visual here?” “Does this deserve an icon?” “How can this data be displayed?”
6. **Choose meaningful design elements, including colors and fonts.** Even these elements should be strategic. For example, color palettes that include red can reinforce a message of danger.
7. **Keep it simple.** A major problem noted with many infographics is a design that fits too much content. Minimal content is the way to go, and visual elements should be the star.
8. **Organize and group content in logical ways.** Content should be split into clear, digestible chunks. Note that even 1 page of draft content in Microsoft Word can at times be too much for an infographic.
9. **Create a clear visual hierarchy.** This may guide the learner through the desired order of what should be read first, next, and last. Because many individuals tend to tackle visual information in chunks, they are likely to view this information in a sequence of how important it seems.
10. **Design for clarity and readability.** Make use of white and negative space to allow content to breathe, use appropriate and readable (sans serif) fonts, build with a grid in mind, and avoid styles that make content or imagery difficult to interpret.

Conclusion

This session covered what infographics are, why they are used, when they are used, and when they shouldn't be used. In general, they may help you identify your audience and goals, communicate data and other health information, reinforce your message visually, educate across barriers, create awareness, and encourage action.

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1. Cox LK. Why are infographics so darn effective? [Infographic]. Hubspot website. Updated July 28, 2017. Accessed October 2021. <https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/effectiveness-infographics#sm.0001lqkcekbcccr810862dx9nrvh>

Resource List

For inspiration

- designspiration.com
- good.is/infographics
- DailyInfographic.com
- abdz.do

For design assistance

- infogr.am
- piktochart.com
- easel.ly
- visual.ly

THE IMPORTANCE OF DATA PRESENTATION

Speaker

Barry Drees, PhD, Senior Partner, Trilogy Writing & Consulting GmbH, Frankfurt, Germany

By Sampoorna Rappaz, PhD

The effectiveness of medical communication hinges on both the text and the accompanying data presentation being fit-for-purpose. Dr Barry Drees, in his presentation at AMWA's 2021 Medical Writing & Communication conference, explained how we can fulfill the ultimate purpose of data presentation, which is to tell a story clearly and simply. Using examples from the domain of regulatory writing, scientific communication, and medical and world history, he illustrated how good data presentation can help focus the message, correct misperceptions, and even save lives!

When done well, each element of data presentation within a document communicates 1 main message, which is determined by the question that the data are answering. Identifying this question and the message will help us decide how to best represent the data (Figure). Distinct data presentation types exist, each suited to a unique purpose. Once we have made a choice, we can use logical design principles to highlight and clarify the message.

Design Considerations for Tables

Dr Drees has the following advice for creating tables:

