

TODD'S STEPS TO WRITING A MANUSCRIPT

With a focused effort, this process can be completed in 3-4 weeks. In our lab, the lead/first author typically puts the figures together and writes the first draft, and then the PI works with the lead author to edit/refine. The PI then submits the manuscript to a journal and serves as corresponding author.

- 1) Make figures with legends. Begin to start deciding which figures will be supplementary.
Graphs can be made in Prism and exported as image files or PDF. I prefer .png files to preserve resolution.
Avoid Excel for graphing.
Figures can be assembled in Photoshop, Illustrator, or Powerpoint, and exported as .jpg (low resolution for internal reviewing) or more likely as .tif (usually required by journals).
- 2A) Send figures/legends to senior author (usually the PI) for reviewing/editing.
Repeat Steps 1 and 2 until figures/legends are fairly solid and tell a story with an order, then proceed to Step 3.
- 2B) Write Intro and Methods.
This can be done while Step 2A is in progress.
- 2C) Think of which journal(s) you are targeting.
- 3) Write Results. Embed all figures and suppl. figures into end of Word document (suppl. tables can be separate files).
Revise figures as needed. Decide what data are supplementary.
- 4) Write Discussion. Revise Results and figures as needed.
- 6) Write Authors, Affiliations, Acknowledgements, Keywords, Running Title. Decide if any Methods get moved to Suppl. Info. depending on journal.
Authorship and order of authors should be based on the level of everyone's contributions to the project and manuscript. These items are usually determined by the PI and the lead author.
- 5) Write Abstract.
- 6) Make a Title for manuscript.
- 7) Send the single Word file containing all manuscript pieces to senior author to edit and comment. The figures and suppl. should still be embedded in the end of the Word file.
The only other file(s) for sharing at this point would be any suppl. tables.
- 8) Make edits per senior author's comments.
Repeat Steps 7 and 8 until manuscript is mature.
- 10) Circulate to co-authors. Allow 1 week for their input.
- 11) PI submits manuscript to journal; the submission process usually takes 2-3 hours.
- 12) Wait 4-6 weeks for journal to respond. Pray and think positive thoughts.