

Author Guide

This two-page guide will save you time and effort – and boost your chances of being published in The Conversation – so please read it before pitching or writing a new article.

Who can write for The Conversation?

- Researchers or academics working at a member university or affiliated research institution (1), publishing original work.
- PhD candidates can be authors. We don't publish Masters or undergrad students.
- We do not publish paid or unpaid public relations material.
- Contributors are not paid.
- Authors must be writing within their area of research expertise.
- Authors must disclose all financial, political or other potential conflicts of interest. Editors will decline articles with clear vested interests.

As a not-for-profit publisher, working with thousands of authors across Australia and New Zealand, we are only able to accept a fraction of the pitches we receive. We aim to respond to all pitches submitted via our pitch pages within three working days.

What do we publish?

- Timely, evidence-based, plain English analysis of issues in the news
- New research with significant findings for our broad, mainly non-academic audience
- Timeless 'explainers' or analysis pieces, answering interesting questions based on research evidence.

Tip

The best way to know what we're likely to publish is to read The Conversation. We recommend authors subscribe to our popular daily AU & NZ email newsletter (2) for all our region's stories, or the NZ weekly e-newsletter (3). Scan headlines, read new research, and know what others in your field are writing about – before you pitch.

How do you pitch a new article?

Australian authors, go to this pitch page (4).
NZ authors, go to this pitch page (5).

Step 1:

To register as a potential author, click on "Sign up" on our Become an Author Page (6) and use your institutional email. Fill in your profile – including a recent photo and your mobile phone so we can contact you more easily.

Step 2:

If you're registered, click on "Sign in".



Step 3:

Click on "Yes – and I'm ready to submit a new pitch", and answer these questions:

- In one sentence, what will your article say? (50 words or fewer)
- Why do our readers need to know about this? (100 words or fewer)
- What key points and examples will you use to support your argument? (150 words or fewer)

Note if you have any real case studies, images, video etc that make your story more compelling.

References:

1. <https://theconversation.com/au/partners>
2. <https://theconversation.com/au/newsletters>
3. <https://theconversation.com/nz/newsletters>
4. <https://theconversation.com/au/pitches>
5. <https://theconversation.com/nz/pitches>
6. <https://theconversation.com/become-an-author>

So you've had a pitch accepted, or we've asked you to write for us. Thank you! What's next?

Your editor will send you an article brief, setting out what the two of you have agreed, including a deadline for submission. Here are some writing tips to get you started.

How do you write a good, clear first draft?

Keep your introduction brief. Within the first three or four short sentences, please include:

- key research findings, or something showing why the reader needs to know this now
- an evocative sentence or two to state your take-home message; essentially, why should a reader care about this?

Tip

The majority of The Conversation's articles are read on a mobile. Most people reading online skim and may not scroll beyond the first few sentences. Grab the reader's attention by starting with your most interesting, newest, or most significant points.



Final author approval

At The Conversation, nothing can be published without final approval from the lead author. So you're safe to tell us about embargoed or confidential research (including in pitches).

If you are the lead author, you will be asked to review your story, including all suggested changes to the main text, images and the headline. Our editors write headlines designed to appear high up in Google searches and attract republishers. A good headline can mean the difference between 10,000 reads and 100,000 reads.

Please do this final review carefully, before hitting approve (or contacting your editor).

A senior editor will then do a final check and may request further changes for you to approve. Post-publication changes are rare, and only for corrections, which will be noted on the article.

Before we publish, let us know if you'd prefer comments to be closed. Comments automatically close after 72 hours, but may be closed early if there's a high risk of breaches of our community standards (7).

Want more?

Read these pitching tips (8), or watch this 3 minute video (9) on our editorial process.

References:

7. <https://theconversation.com/au/community-standards>
8. <https://theconversation.com/how-to-pitch-to-the-conversation-105850>
9. <https://bit.ly/TC-YT-howwework>