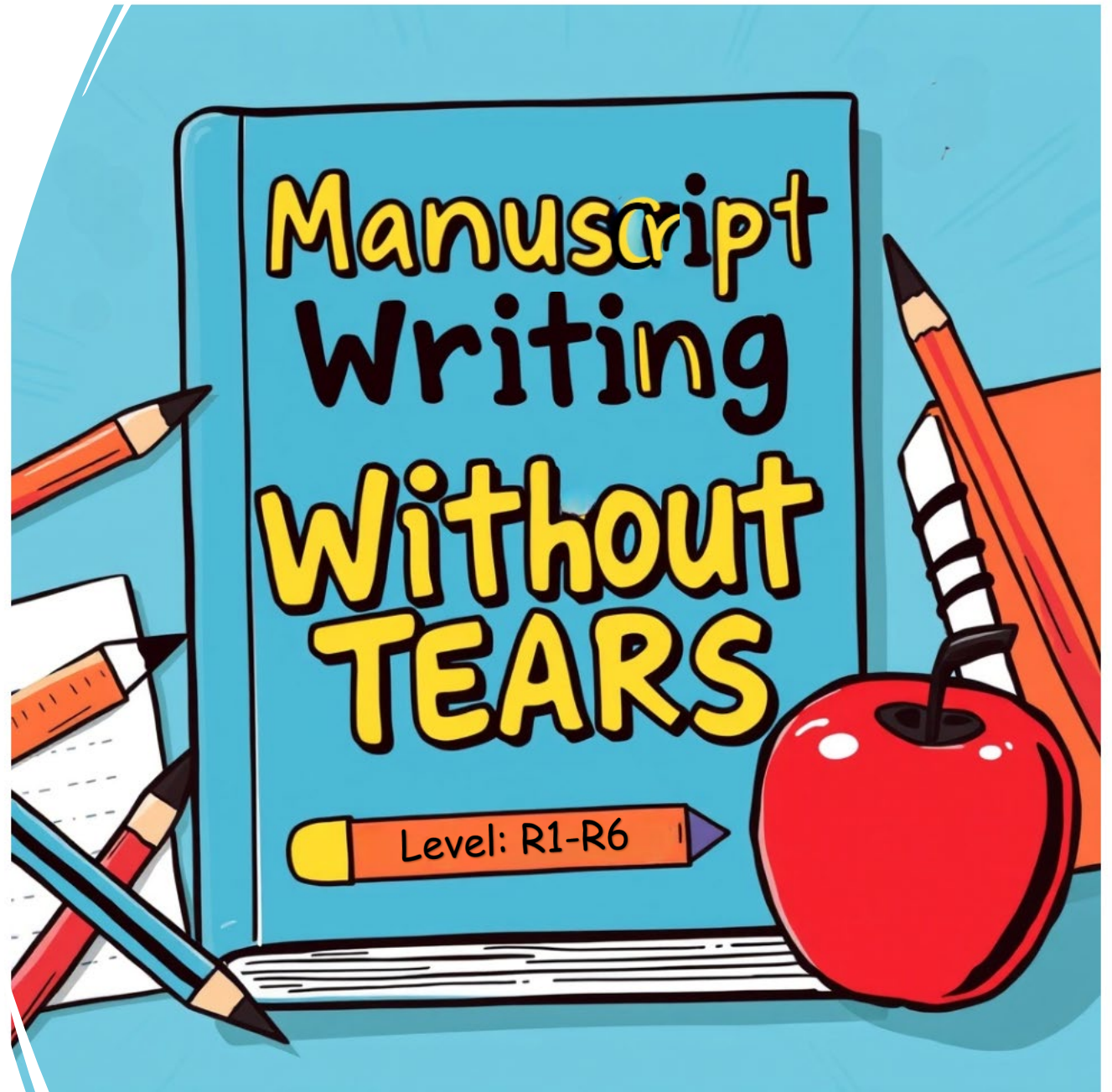


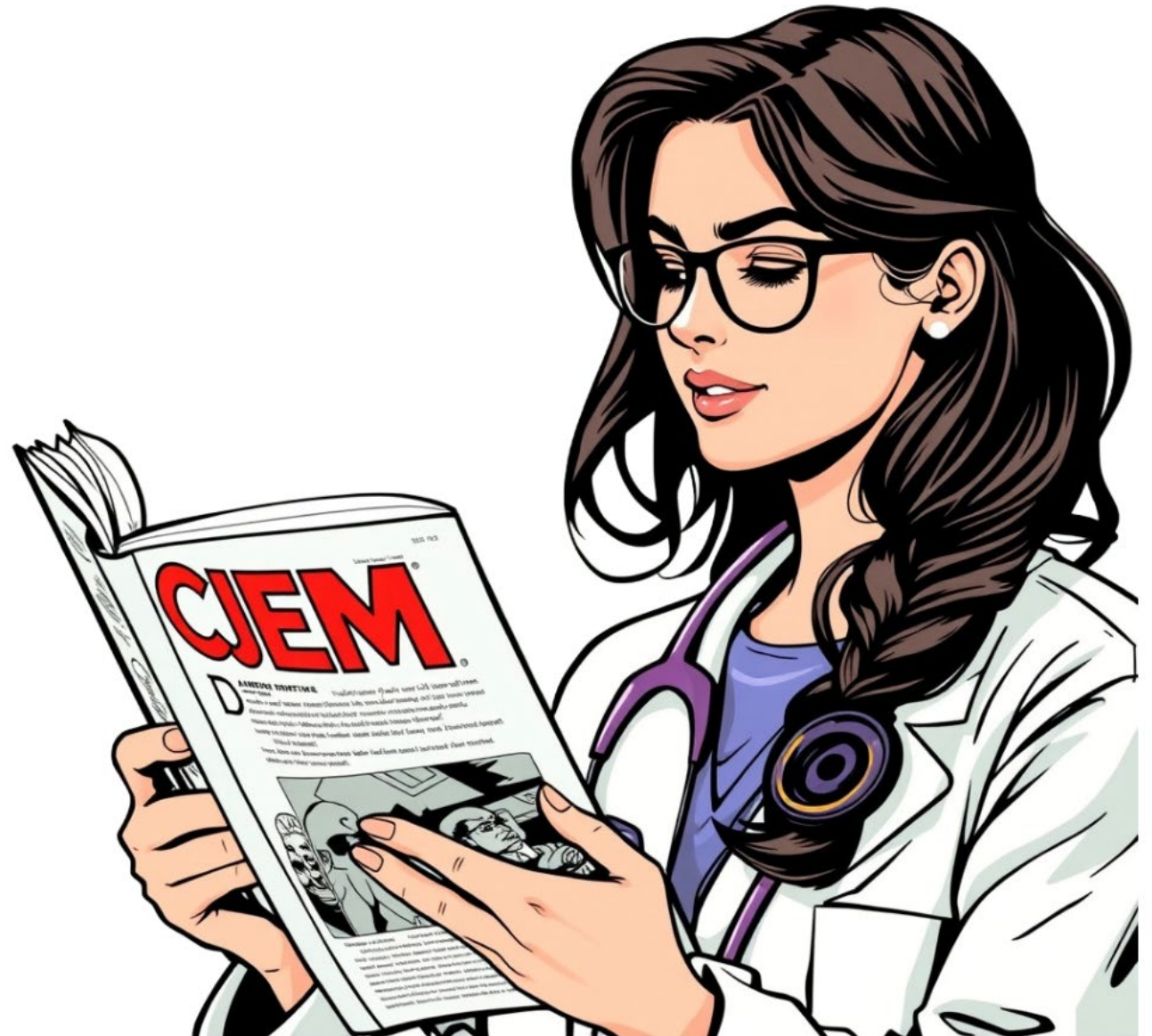
Manuscript Writing Without Tears: A Step- by-Step Guide to Publishing Your Work

Jennifer Thull-Freedman, MD, MSc
Decision Editor,
Canadian Journal of Emergency Medicine
Editorial Board, Hospital Pediatrics



Objectives

- Learn a practical and efficient approach to writing and submitting a manuscript that will:
 - Tell a story that appeals to reviewers, editors and readers
 - Combat perfectionism and overwhelm
 - Not cause you excessive pain
 - Increase your chances of publishing your work



No one wants to read a write-up

- You know your study is awesome
- Unless you draw in the reader...no one will find out
- A dry report detailing everything you did will bore your readers
- What is the story you want to tell?
 - Why does your topic matter?
 - What makes your work interesting?
 - How do your findings relate to something that matters to readers?



What's Your Story?



- According to Dr. Lorelei Lingard, author of “Story Not Study,” when we tell a story:
- We show readers how our project relates to something they care about.
- We convince them that our story builds on, complicates, or challenges other stories that have been told.
- We persuade them that our approach was logical and trustworthy.
- We share our limitations honestly without minimizing our impact.

Start Submission

COLLECTION

The Writer's Craft Collection: Resources to enhance your academic writing

Collection launched: Feb 1, 2023

This special collection brings together all of the Writer's Craft publications, which aim to support scholars to improve their academic writing. Browse to find resources to enhance your own writing or to share with trainees and colleagues who are honing the craft.

https://pmejournal.org/collections/writers_craft

Excellent
Resource!

PME

THE WRITER'S CRAFT

The story behind the synthesis: writing an effective introduction to your scoping review

Lingard & Colquhoun

Aug 12, 2022

[11\(5\)](#): 1-6

PME

THE WRITER'S CRAFT

Writing for the reader: Using reader expectation principles to maximize clarity

Lingard

Mar 8, 2022

[11\(4\)](#): 228-231

PME

THE WRITER'S CRAFT

When English clashes with other languages: Insights and cautions from the *Writer's Craft* series

Lingard et al.

Nov 3, 2021

[10\(6\)](#): 347-351

PME

THE WRITER'S CRAFT

Don't be reviewer 2! Reflections on writing effective peer review comments

Watling et al.

Jun 11, 2021

[10\(5\)](#): 299-303

PME

THE WRITER'S CRAFT

Collaborative writing: Strategies and activities for writing productively together

Lingard

May 7, 2021

[10\(3\)](#): 163-166

PME

THE WRITER'S CRAFT

Writing an effective literature review: Part II: Citation technique

Lingard

Mar 2, 2018

[7\(2\)](#): 133-135

PME

THE WRITER'S CRAFT

Writing an effective literature review: Part I: Mapping the gap

Lingard

Dec 19, 2017

[7\(1\)](#): 47-49

PME

THE WRITER'S CRAFT

Does your discussion realize its potential?

Lingard

Sep 4, 2017

[6\(5\)](#): 344-346

PME

THE WRITER'S CRAFT

Tuning your writing

Watling

Apr 10, 2017

[6\(3\)](#): 189-191

PME

THE WRITER'S CRAFT

Mastering the sentence

Lingard

Dec 8, 2016

[6\(1\)](#): 51-53

PME

THE WRITER'S CRAFT

The three 'S's of editing: story, structure, and style

Watling

Jul 26, 2016

[5\(5\)](#): 300-302

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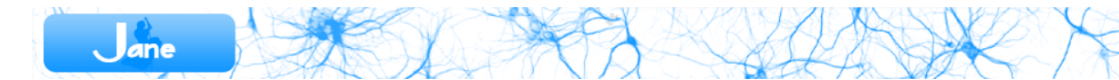
Tips for Choosing a Journal

- Your supervisor probably has good suggestions
- Helpful tools:
 - JANE (jane.biosemantics.org)
 - Provide your title and/or abstract and get recommendations
 - Scimago (scimagojr.com)
 - Search by topic, country, Web of Science indexing



Insert your title and/or abstract here: (or, click [here](#) to search using keywords)

Codesign of a survey to measure family safety experience to reflect family priorities of parents of children admitted to a pediatric hospital.



Confidence	Journal	Article Influence	Articles
	Pediatrics Medline-indexed	2.3	Show articles
	Journal of pain and symptom management Medline-indexed	1.1	Show articles
	Journal of patient experience High-quality open access PMC		Show articles
	Journal of autism and developmental disorders Medline-indexed	1.3	Show articles
	Children (Basel, Switzerland) High-quality open access PMC		Show articles
	Journal for specialists in pediatric nursing : JSPN Medline-indexed	0.4	Show articles
	The Turkish journal of pediatrics	0.2	Show articles
	JAMA network open High-quality open access		Show articles
	CMAJ open PMC		Show articles
	European journal of pediatrics Medline-indexed	0.6	Show articles

Medicine

Pediatrics, Perinatology and Child Health

Canada

Journals

2024

☐ Only Open Access Journals
 ☐ Only Diamond Open Access Journals
 ☐ Only SciELO Journals
 ☒ Only WoS Journals
 Display journals with at least 0
 Citable Docs. (3years)
 Apply

Download data

1 - 2 of 2

	Title	Type	↓ SJR	H index	Total Docs. (2024)	Total Docs. (3years)	Total Refs. (2024)	Total Citations (3years)	Citable Docs. (3years)	Citations / Doc. (2years)	Ref. / Doc. (2024)	%Female (2024)
1	Journal of the Canadian Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry	journal	0.558 Q2	47	27	112	860	140	62	1.09	31.85	63.89
2	Paediatrics and Child Health	journal	0.502 Q2	63	83	374	2329	535	354	1.45	28.06	65.22



Build a Skeleton



Create an outline using a reporting standard, authors instructions, and example articles

- **Reporting Standards (EQUATOR Network)**
- Repository of reporting standards for most study types
 - CONSORT for clinical trials
 - STROBE for observational studies
 - SQUIRE for QI projects
- Locate and review author instructions in your journal of choice
- Find a couple of articles of similar study design to yours, ideally published in your target journal

<https://www.equator-network.org/reporting-guidelines/>

 Reporting guidelines for main study types		
Randomised trials	CONSORT	Extensions
Observational studies	STROBE	Extensions
Systematic reviews	PRISMA	Extensions
Study protocols	SPIRIT	PRISMA-P
Diagnostic/prognostic studies	STARD	TRIPOD
Case reports	CARE	Extensions
Clinical practice guidelines	AGREE	RIGHT
Qualitative research	SRQR	COREQ
Animal pre-clinical studies	ARRIVE	
Quality improvement studies	SQUIRE	Extensions
Economic evaluations	CHEERS	Extensions

“Make me an outline based on STROBE and CJEM author instructions”

STROBE Statement—Checklist of items that should be included in reports of *cross-sectional studies*

	Item No	Recommendation
Title and abstract	1	(a) Indicate the study’s design with a commonly used term in the title or the abstract
		(b) Provide in the abstract an informative and balanced summary of what was done and what was found
Introduction		
Background/rationale	2	Explain the scientific background and rationale for the investigation being reported
Objectives	3	State specific objectives, including any prespecified hypotheses
Methods		
Study design	4	Present key elements of study design early in the paper
Setting	5	Describe the setting, locations, and relevant dates, including periods of recruitment, exposure, follow-up, and data collection

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

- Summarize what is already known, with key references.
- Establish the knowledge gap or clinical relevance.
- Keep concise (3–4 paragraphs max).

1.2 Rationale

- Identify the specific uncertainty or problem in emergency medicine practice.

1.3 Objective(s)

- Clearly state primary and (if applicable) secondary objectives/hypotheses.
- Align with STROBE's recommendation for explicit objectives.

2. Methods (*Follow STROBE checklist items for observational studies.*)

2.1 Study Design and Setting

- Design (e.g., retrospective cohort, cross-sectional, case-control).
- Study period and context (ED type, city, country, patient volume).
- Institutional ethics approval and waiver/consent details.

2.2 Participants

- Inclusion/exclusion criteria.
- Sampling or recruitment strategy.
- Data sources (e.g., EMR, registry, database).
- Flow diagram (if applicable) per STROBE item 13.



ChatGPT

Canadian Journal of Emergency Medicine

Inspiring excellence in emergency medical care



CJEM JCMU

 Springer

Canadian Journal of Emergency Medicine (2022) 24:117–119
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s43678-021-00241-5>

COMMENTARY

Guide to writing and publishing a scientific manuscript: Part 1—structure

Ian G. Stiell^{1,2}  • For the Canadian EM Writing Group

Received: 17 November 2021 / Accepted: 19 November 2021 / Published online: 21 December 2021
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Canadian Journal of Emergency Medicine (2022) 24:120–122
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s43678-021-00242-4>

COMMENTARY

Guide to writing and publishing a scientific manuscript: part 2—the process

Ian G. Stiell^{1,2}  on behalf of Canadian E. M. Writing Group

Received: 18 November 2021 / Accepted: 19 November 2021 / Published online: 10 January 2022
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Excellent
Resources!





CJEM Guide to Writing and Publishing a Scientific Manuscript

- Part 1: The Structure
 - Three-paragraph Introduction
 - Standard Methods subheadings
 - One-paragraph of per table or figure in Results
 - Organizing the Discussion with subheadings
 - Interpretation
 - Previous Studies
 - Strengths and Limitations
 - Clinical Implications
 - Research Implication
 - Conclusions

Write a Junk Draft

- Start filling in your outline without worrying about word choice.
- Use casual voice and filler sentences if you get stuck (“Sentence here about association between language barriers and medical errors.”)
- Add dummy tables and charts
- Consider writing your junk draft before you finish your project!





Lorelei Lingard
Christopher Watling

Story, Not Study:
30 Brief Lessons to Inspire
Health Researchers as Writers

The Introduction: Joining a Conversation with Problem/Gap/Hook

- Journals exist to promote scholarly conversation
 - What problem are people talking about?
 - What is a gap in the current understanding?
 - Convince readers that the gap matters.
 - Describe what you will do to address it.
- Inverted triangle introductions can get boring (e.g. “Sepsis is a really bad global problem...”)

Lingard L. Joining a conversation: the problem/gap/hook heuristic. *Perspect Med Educ*. 2015

Joining the Conversation

1. Address the problem
 - Identify what is being discussed
 - Show that you understand the conversation
2. Show the gap
 - Clarify what is missing or uncertain in the conversation
3. What's the hook?
 - Explain why the gap matters
4. State what you will add



Methods: “Trust me. I know what I’m doing.”

L. Lingard in Story, Not Study

- Name study design and specific methods used.
- Justify and explain choices.
- Avoid jargon that is unlikely to be understood by readers. Educate when needed.
- Anticipate reviewer critiques and address pre-emptively.



Methods

- Follow the reporting standard that corresponds to your study unless your journal specifies otherwise. Don't make readers search for answers.
- Standard subheadings
 - Study Design
 - Study Setting
 - Participants
 - Interventions
 - Outcome Measures
 - Data Collection
 - Data Analysis
 - Sample Size
 - Project Ethics



Results

Organize your results to support your story.

- **Use a logical order:** Present findings in a sequence that aligns with your research questions or objectives.
- **Move from broad to specific:** Start with general results and move to detailed findings relevant to study aims.
- **Key Elements in the Results Section**
 - **Primary Findings First:** Present main findings directly related to your research question.
 - **Secondary Findings or Sub-analyses:** Include only if they add value to the main narrative and are pre-specified.

Tables and Figures: Provide clarity; don't be redundant.

- **Avoid Repetition:** Describe only key takeaways in text that are not redundant with tables/figures.



Results

Table 1: Descriptive Characteristics of the Sample

- **Purpose:** Provide an overview of participant demographics and baseline characteristics.
- **Include:** Age, gender, clinical characteristics.

Flow Diagrams (e.g., CONSORT Diagram)

- **Patient Inclusion/Exclusion:** Use to show the number of participants screened, excluded, and analyzed. Essential if the study involves patient selection steps (e.g., RCTs or cohort studies).

Additional Tips for Tables and Figures

- **Consistency:** Use the same order for variables across tables/figures.
- **Titles and Legends:** Ensure clarity; captions should allow tables and figures to stand alone.
- **Highlight Key Findings:** Bold or annotate major points in tables to guide readers.



Discussion: Bring your story to conclusion.

- **Interpret, Don't Restate:** Provide insight into what findings mean rather than repeating results.
- **Position Findings in the Broader Context**
- **Literature Comparison:** Relate findings to existing studies and identify alignment or differences.
- **Highlight Contributions:** Show how your study advances understanding or fills a knowledge gap.
- **Acknowledge Limitations:** Be honest about constraints and their impact. This should be a reflection, not a list of excuses or dismissals.
- **Offer Next Steps and Meaningful Conclusions**
- **Future Directions:** Suggest logical follow-up studies or applications.
- **Summarize Implications:** Explain significance without overstating conclusions beyond project scope and findings.



Polish



Timelines and Feedback

- Start writing while you do the project, not after
- Work with your supervisor on a timeline
- Break down writing into sections
- Ask for feedback on each part
- Address authorship order before project starts
- Share drafts early
- Set meetings
- Deadlines for feedback
- Address publication fees when choosing journals



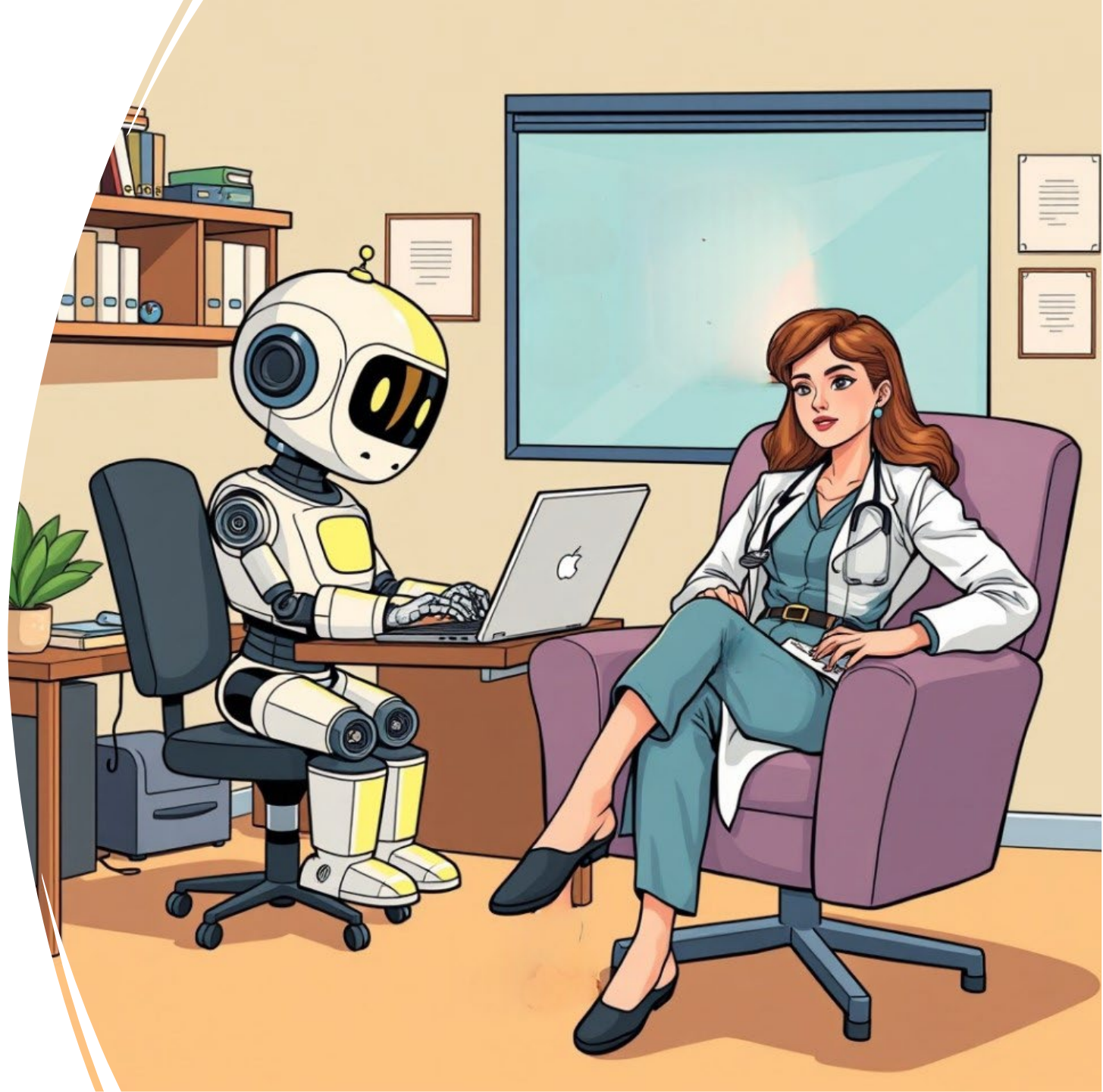
Writing Clubs

- Consider making a commitment with friends/colleagues to write and review together



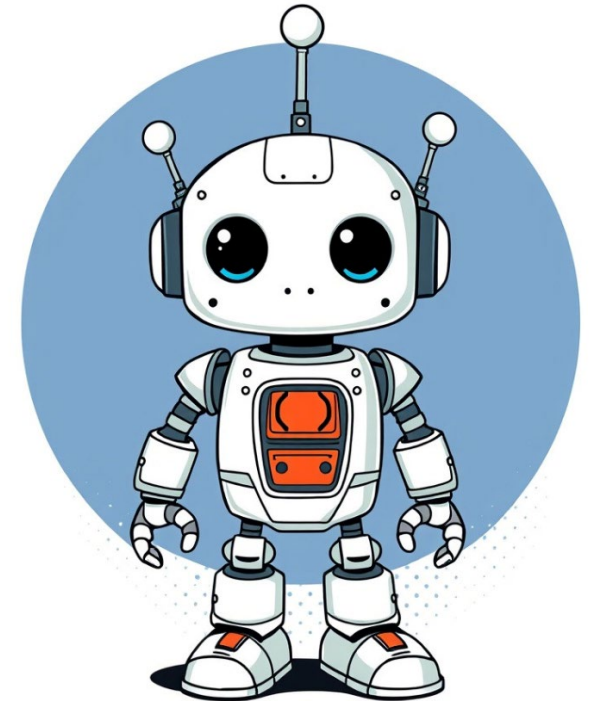
What about AI?

- Many journals have issued positions
- Pitfalls to AI support (e.g. hallucinations)
- Can be useful for generating outlines, brainstorming, improving clarity
- Check carefully for errors!



Springer Nature Policy (CJEM)

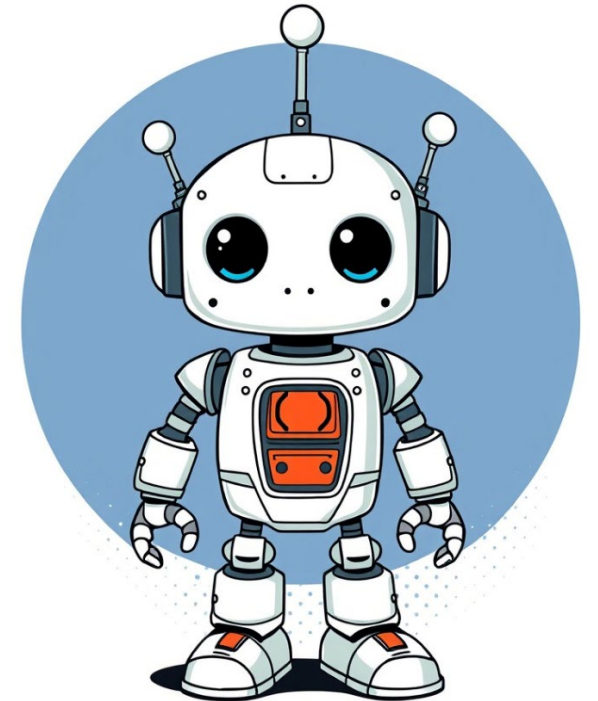
- **Authorship Criteria:** Large Language Models (LLMs) like ChatGPT cannot be authors.
- **Accountability:** Only humans are accountable for the work.
- **Documentation:** If using an LLM, document it in the Methods section.
- **Copy Editing:** AI-assisted copy editing (improving text for readability, grammar, etc.) does not need to be declared.
- **Definition of AI-Assisted Copy Editing:**
 - Enhances human-generated texts.
 - Fixes errors in grammar, spelling, and tone.
 - Excludes content generation or autonomous editing.
- **Final Text Accountability:** Humans must ensure the final text reflects the authors' work and take responsibility for edits.



Elsevier Policy (J Peds, Acad Peds)

AI Disclosure

- Authors should disclose the use of AI Tools for manuscript preparation in a separate AI declaration statement in their manuscript upon submission and a statement will appear in the published work.
- Authors should document their use of AI, including the name of the AI Tool used, the purpose of the use, and the extent of their oversight.
- Basic checks of grammar, spelling and punctuation need no declaration.



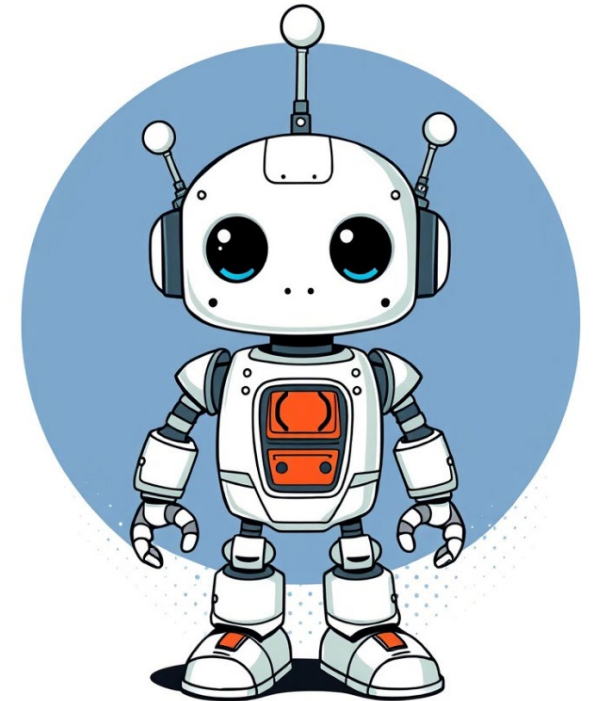
Pediatrics Policy

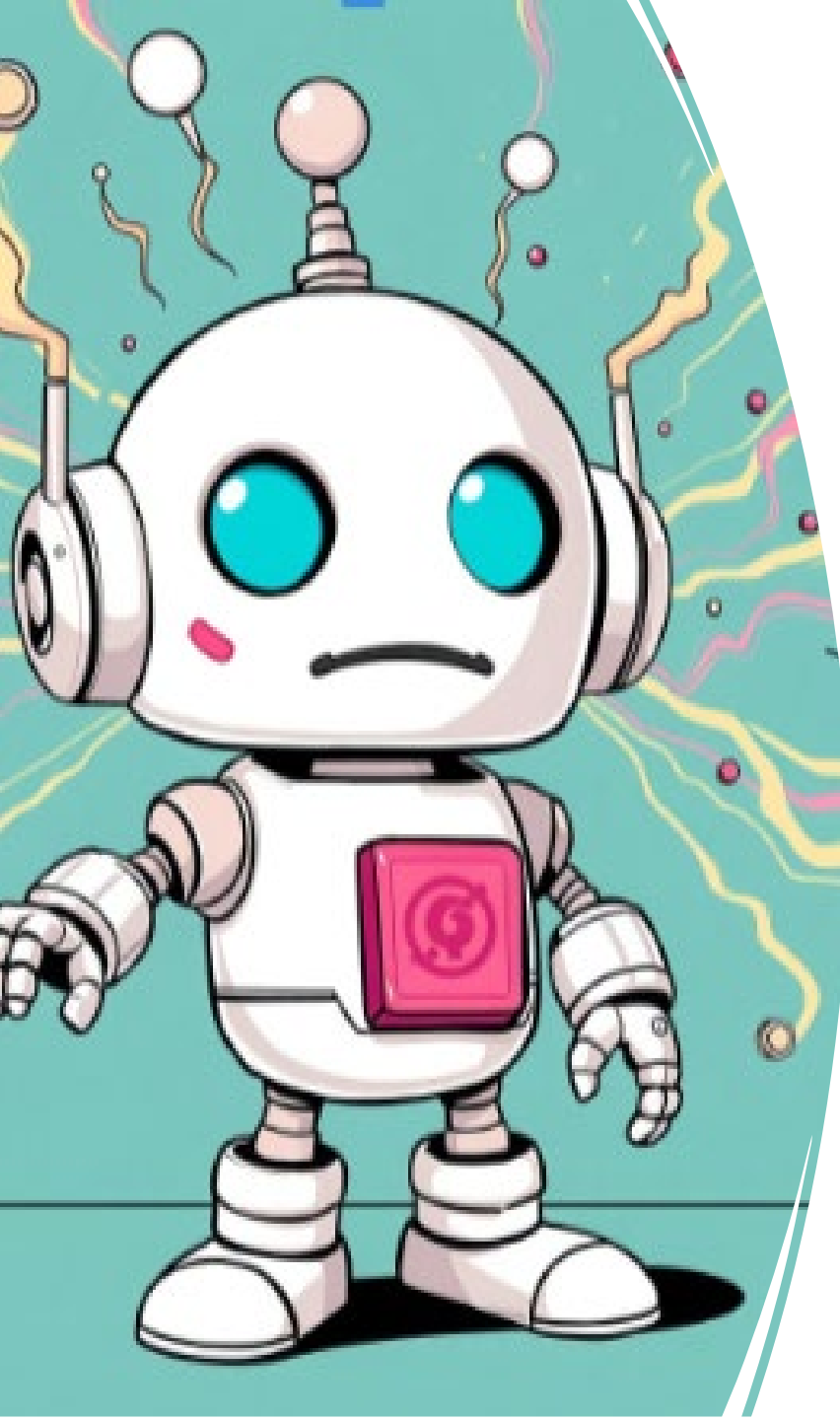
American Academy of Pediatrics
DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN®



Artificial Intelligence

- AI tools cannot take responsibility for the accuracy or integrity of a manuscript and, therefore, do not qualify for authorship.
- While the use of AI tools is discouraged, if generative AI tools are used in any part of manuscript preparation, from writing to data analysis to image creation, the authors must report it in the Methods and Acknowledgments sections and note use of an AI tool in the cover letter.
- Identification of AI must include the name and manufacturer of the AI tool and how it was used in relation to the work being submitted.



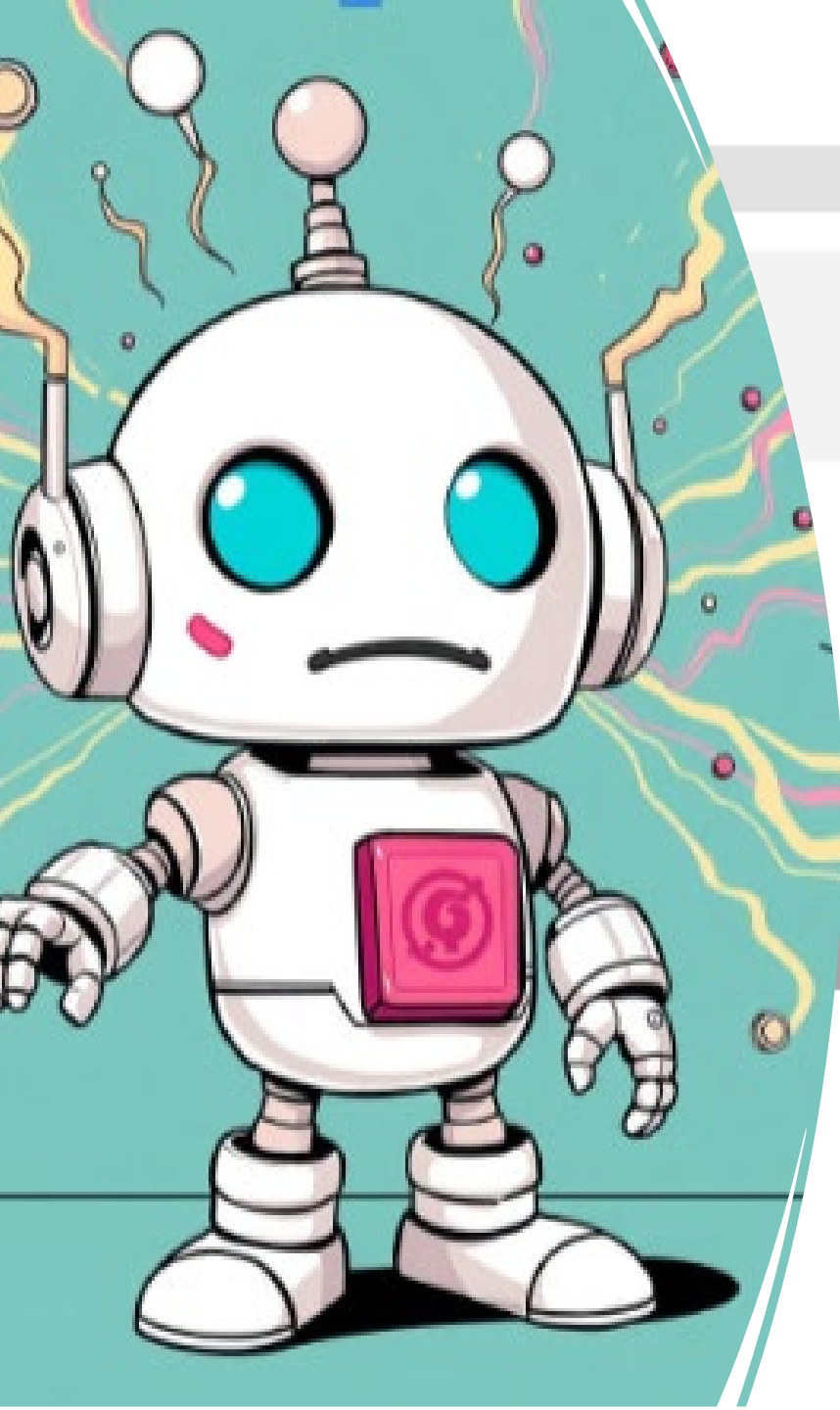


Question to Chat GPT:

What are the 5 most widely read articles by Jennifer Thull-Freedman?

Please provide full references.

1. **Thull-Freedman J, Noel M.** (2023). "We Can End the Harm Caused by Preventable Needle Pain: The Promise of Quality Improvement." *Hospital Pediatrics*, 13(12): e384–e386. This commentary discusses the significance of quality improvement initiatives to minimize needle pain for children in clinical settings.
2. **Bar Am N, Thull-Freedman J, Ali S.** (2021). "Practice Patterns and Assessment of Needs for Pediatric Pain Management in Alberta Emergency Departments." *Open Access Emergency Medicine*, 13: 587-594. This study examines pain management practices in Alberta's emergency departments, highlighting existing gaps and areas for QI.
3. **Ali S, Thull-Freedman J, et al.** (2022). "The Efficacy of Topical Anesthesia in Pediatric Emergency Medicine: A Comprehensive Review." *Pediatric Emergency Care Journal*. This article reviews the effectiveness of topical anesthesia in reducing pain in pediatric emergency settings, addressing factors influencing its adoption in emergency medicine.
4. **Thull-Freedman J, Atkinson P, et al.** (2020). "A Survey of Procedural Pain Practices in Pediatric Emergency Medicine." *Emergency Medicine Journal*. This survey investigates the frequency and management of procedural pain, finding considerable variability and a need for standardized pain management practices across settings.
5. **Thull-Freedman J, Noel M, et al.** (2023). "Improving Pediatric Pain Outcomes Through Distraction Techniques and Quality Initiatives." *Canadian Journal of Emergency Medicine*. This article explores how distraction techniques contribute to better pediatric pain management.



Ethical Use Cases of AI Generative Tools in Writing

APPLICATION		KEY CONSIDERATION
Tier 1 Ethically acceptable	Grammar and Spelling	Ensure AI edits reflect your own voice and critical thinking
	Readability	Ensure AI edits reflect your own voice and critical thinking
	Language Translation	Double check translation, ensure AI edits reflect your own voice and critical thinking
Tier 2 Ethically contingent	Generating outline from content	Ensure AI generated outline aligns with journal requirements
	Summarizing content	Ensure final product reflects your own ideas and insights
	Improving clarity of content	Ensure AI edits do not alter the key meaning or messages
	Brainstorm ideas	Ensure appropriate attribution of credit for new ideas
Tier 3 Ethically suspect	Drafting de novo text	Review literature
	Developing new concepts	Determining ethical compliance
	Data interpretation	Checking for plagiarism

**Generative AI
not recommended**

Cheng, A., Calhoun, A. & Reedy, G. Artificial intelligence-assisted academic writing: recommendations for ethical use. *Adv Simul* **10**, 22 (2025).

Preparing for Submission

- Ensure all co-authors approve final draft
- Cover letter
 - Makes a first impression on editors. Should be brief and highlight strengths of study.
- Files and formatting
 - Double-check author instructions
- COI forms
 - Usually required of all authors, but not always at time of submission
- Typical response time approximately 1-2 months



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CJEM JCMU

 Springer

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<https://doi.org/10.1007/s43678-021-00241-5>

COMMENTARY

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Excellent
Resources!



CJEM Guide to Writing and Publishing a Scientific Manuscript

Part 2: The Process

Submission

- Double-check instructions (abstract, word count, summary).
- Cover letter brief — editors rely on the abstract.
- Notify all authors of submission, decisions, and comments.

If rejected:

- Choose next journal quickly.
- Fix only clear errors, re-format, and resubmit fast — don't rewrite to match old reviews.



Revise and Resubmit

- Respond fully to each comment
- Cut and paste comments into new document or table
- Be humble and appreciative in tone
- Circulate revisions and responses to co-authors and request fast review (e.g. 7 days)



Accepted!



- Notify all coauthors
- Send a pdf and article citation to all coauthors when published

Congratulations!



Step-by-Step Summary

1. Start writing at the start of the project
2. Figure out the story you will tell
3. Clarify authors and order
4. Decide where you want to tell your story (2 journals)
5. Create an outline using your reporting standard, author instructions, and an example study
6. Turn your outline into a junk draft with filler sentences and dummy tables and figures
7. Make a timeline for each section and set up regular meetings with your supervisor
8. Consider working with friends for motivation
9. Write a cover letter that shares your story. What's the problem you're addressing, what's the gap readers will care about, and what are you contributing?
10. Plan to revise and resubmit, and remember to celebrate when you're finally published!

