

**SUGGESTIONS TO AUTHORS OF
PAPERS SUBMITTED FOR PUBLICATION
BY THE UNITED STATES GEOLOGICAL
SURVEY WITH DIRECTIONS TO
TYPEWRITER OPERATORS**

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Suggestions to authors of papers submitted for publication by the United States Geological Survey with directions to typewriter operators by George McLane Wood

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GEORGE MCLANE WOOD

**SUGGESTIONS TO AUTHORS OF
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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
UNITED STATES GEOLOGICAL SURVEY
GEORGE OTIS SMITH, Director

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BY
GEORGE McLANE WOOD
EDITOR

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NOTE.

The first pamphlet containing suggestions to authors for the preparation of manuscript intended for publication by the Geological Survey was published in January, 1888. This pamphlet was revised and reprinted in 1892. In 1904 the Survey published suggestions for the preparation of geologic folios, and in 1906 suggestions for the preparation of reports on mining districts. All matter of present value that was included in these publications, with much additional material, has been incorporated in the pamphlet here presented. The first edition of this pamphlet was published in 1909. The edition now published contains some new material and discusses in greater detail several suggestions that were made in the first edition. In the compilation of both editions valuable aid has been rendered by Mr. Bernard H. Lane, assistant editor.

G. M. W.

JULY, 1913.

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U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

CONTENTS.

	Page.
Suggestions to authors.....	5
Classes of publications.....	5
Course of manuscripts.....	5
Form and features of manuscript.....	6
Method of writing.....	6
The best printer's copy.....	6
General form.....	7
Conciseness of statement.....	7
Table of contents and list of illustrations.....	8
Headings.....	8
Paragraphing.....	9
First or third person and use of "we".....	9
Cross references.....	9
Tables.....	9
Geologic names.....	10
Geographic names.....	12
Hyphens in petrographic terms.....	12
Personal titles.....	14
Chemical terms and symbols.....	15
Quotations and references.....	15
Footnotes.....	16
Typographic style.....	19
Correction of proof sheets.....	22
Illustrations.....	26
Geologic folios.....	29
General suggestions.....	29
Introduction.....	30
Topography.....	30
Descriptive geology.....	31
Geologic history.....	32
Mineral resources.....	32
Reports on mining districts.....	33
General suggestions.....	33
Subject order.....	34
Definitions.....	35
Materials.....	36
Forms.....	36
Processes.....	39
Mining terms.....	39

Suggestions to authors—Continued.	Page.
Suggestions as to expression.....	42
General observations.....	42
Common verbal faults.....	43
Words misused or overused.....	43
Words and phrases to be discriminated.....	46
Superfluous words.....	48
Some typical errors.....	48
Grammatical and rhetorical errors.....	49
Bad habits of expression.....	52
Foreign words and phrases.....	56
Directions to typewriter operators.....	57

ILLUSTRATION.

FIGURE 1. Diagram illustrating application of terms used in describing ore bodies.....	Page.
	39

SUGGESTIONS TO AUTHORS.

CLASSES OF PUBLICATIONS.

The publications of the Geological Survey consist, besides topographic maps and miscellaneous circulars and pamphlets, of (a) annual reports, relating chiefly to administrative affairs; (b) monographs, exhaustive treatises on restricted or special subjects; (c) professional papers, mainly of a technical character, adapted to larger illustrations than can be conveniently put into bulletins; (d) bulletins, the most numerous class, comprising all papers not assigned to one of the other classes; (e) water-supply papers; (f) annual statistical volumes on mineral resources; and (g) geologic folios. If it seems doubtful whether a particular paper should be published in one or another of these classes, the author may make a recommendation, and the chief of branch, when he transmits a paper, will state the class in which it should be published.

COURSE OF MANUSCRIPTS.

Every paper should be transmitted to the Director by the chief of the branch in which it originated, whose recommendation for publication will be regarded as an approval of the paper from a scientific or technical point of view. If a paper originating in one branch, say the water resources, contains matter pertaining to the work of another branch, say the geologic, the chief under whom the paper originated should, before transmitting it to the Director, refer it to the chief of the other branch for approval (after revision if necessary) of the portion germane to the work of his branch.

When a manuscript is received it will be referred to the editor, who, after giving it a preliminary examination and ascertaining that it is complete in form and ready for his action, will lay it before the Director for his personal consideration. When the Director approves the paper for publication he will return it to the editor for critical examination and preparation for printing.

The final editorial work is largely literary and typographic in character. It includes suggestions to the author concerning the correction of faults or errors in grammar or rhetoric, in paragraphing, or in arrangement of matter—in short, suggestions affecting correctness, clearness, and conciseness of expression. It comprises also the examination of many other details, such as the character and grada-

tion of headings, the form of footnotes, the use of geographic and geologic names, the form of tables and sections, and the various minutiae of printing, including sizes and styles of type, capitalization, punctuation, spelling, and other features of typographic style. The determination of many of these details is made in accordance with prescribed rules, such as those of the Government Printing Office Style Book, or mandatory decisions, such as those of the United States Geographic Board or of the Survey's committee on geologic names.

After editorial revision the manuscript will be returned to the author whenever practicable, in order that he may examine the suggestions or corrections made. If any of the editorial changes seem to him to be inadvisable, he should confer or correspond with the editor and endeavor to reach an agreement without delay. If the edited manuscript is acceptable to the author, he need only write his initials and the date on the back of the title-page.

FORM AND FEATURES OF MANUSCRIPT.

METHOD OF WRITING.

It is bad practice, especially for young writers, to dictate offhand from field notes, with the intention of rearranging and polishing the typewritten material thus obtained to form a final report. Reports prepared in this way almost invariably bear indications of slovenly work. As far as possible, the final writing should be preceded by a complete study of material. This study should include examinations of specimens and samples collected and the preparation of maps, sketches, and photographs for illustrations. During this preliminary study notes and memoranda should be made in such form that they can be sorted and classified under the different subject heads adopted.

THE BEST PRINTER'S "COPY."

The best "copy" for the printer is typewritten matter on letter paper (sheets about 8 by 10½ inches) of ordinary thickness. Thin "manifold" paper should not be used. If two copies of the manuscript are made, the original (not the carbon) should be transmitted. All the sheets should be of uniform size and the typewriting should be on only one side of the paper, in lines rather widely spaced, not "solid." The practice of pasting sheets together to form a sheet or strip that is longer than letter paper and then folding it to letter size is objectionable. It is not important that every sheet should be completely filled with writing. Room for wide tables can be obtained by pasting additional sheets at the side only, but this plan should not be employed for additions to the text. Copy for tables should not be crowded, and it is not necessary that the whole of a table

should appear on one sheet. Matter for bibliographies or other similar works may be written on cards, and in some papers large sheets bearing tables or geologic columns will be accepted as copy.

Just before the manuscript is transmitted, after all inserts and additions have been made, the pages should be numbered consecutively from beginning to end. Manuscript should not be folded or rolled, but should be kept "flat" and transmitted in a secure envelope or cover. Drawings or photographs that are intended for use as illustrations should be kept distinct from the manuscript, not inserted in it, but should generally be transmitted at the same time.

GENERAL FORM.

Before preparing a paper for publication an author should, by examining the Survey's printed reports, familiarize himself with the details of their form, many of which are set forth herein. He should at the outset carefully consider the arrangement or order of presentation of the matter of his paper. Special suggestions as to the preparation of geologic folios and of reports on mining districts are presented on pages 29-41 and will be serviceable in indicating the proper treatment in many papers of other kinds. They are, of course, only supplemental to the suggestions given in the first part of this pamphlet, which apply to all Survey publications.

The title of a paper should be brief—as brief as it can be made—and, with the name of the author, should appear not only on the title-page, but at the top of the first page of the text.

Each paper should include a preface by the chief of the division or section in which it originated, a summary of its important results or conclusions, and a short bibliography of the subject discussed.

CONCISENESS OF STATEMENT.

The author should express his meaning clearly and concisely and should avoid unnecessary repetition. Direct, simple statement of facts is more to be desired than rounded periods, rhetorical flourishes, or studied originality of expression. An author can avoid unnecessary repetition only by logically subdividing his material under proper heads before commencing the final writing.

On the other hand, a certain kind of repetition is permissible and even desirable. Thus each chapter or major subdivision of a report should be fairly complete within itself—that is, if necessary, it should contain very brief statements of the main conclusions reached in other chapters, so that the reader may, if he desires, be able to read that chapter understandingly without reference to other chapters. Therefore, instead of saying that "this point is explained in another part of the report," it is better to state briefly the explanation, which