

Guidelines for *Nature* News & Views articles

Nature's News & Views section provides a forum in which scientific news can be communicated to a wide audience spanning the disciplines from astronomy to zoology.

News & Views articles are short (usually 800–900 words), and have as much in common with journalistic news reports as the formal scientific literature. They should therefore make clear the advance being discussed, and communicate a sense of excitement, yet provide a critical evaluation of the research concerned.

Please ask someone from an entirely different discipline to comment on a draft article before submission to *Nature*. It is essential that the article is written with such readers in mind rather than just for specialist colleagues.

1. How to write it

The 'news' should be highlighted in a brief opening paragraph to attract the attention of those who are not experts in the field. This paragraph should explicitly refer to the paper under discussion and touch on the general significance of the work. More detail, background and explanation should follow, including your own 'views'. The text is often best rounded off with comment on the limitations and implications of the new work, and on future research directions. Authors should avoid referring to their own work, except in passing.

2. Diagrams

Diagrams can be used to explain the new points made or the background science. *Nature's* art department can turn authors' sketches into publication-quality graphics, as long as the sketches are clear. Draft diagrams can be faxed (the number is given under 'Contact details') or sent electronically. Captions should be succinct but self-contained; readers like the main message of an article to be repeated briefly in the caption. Suggestions of other illustrative material, black-and-white or colour, informative or decorative, are welcome.

3. Titles

Titles for articles are open to discussion. They should be short and contain no punctuation marks or abbreviations. News & Views articles also carry a 'subject strapline' of one or two words to define the general subject area of the article, and a 'standfirst', a short item in larger type that precedes the main text and is intended to entice readers to read on.

4. References

References should be kept to a minimum, ideally fewer than ten. They should be given superscript numbers and cited sequentially in the text. Please do not use EndNote or a similar program. If the News & Views article is to accompany a paper in the same issue of *Nature*, the paper should be given a formal reference and be referred to in the first paragraph in the form "... on page xxx of this issue¹...". References should be listed at the end of the article, and the first and last page numbers of cited papers should be included. If there are six or more authors to a reference, the first author only should be listed, followed by *et al.*

5. Acknowledgements and authorship

Acknowledgements are not allowed, nor are grant numbers. There should be no more than two authors.

6. Fees

A modest fee is paid for all News & Views articles published.

7. Sending the article

Articles should be delivered by e-mail, preferably as a Word attachment though plain ASCII text will do. If you are to be away during the month after submission, please also include a note of how you can be contacted.

8. Editing and corrections

Articles are on occasion heavily edited. But authors are given every opportunity to ensure accuracy by being sent an edited version of the text to correct (usually as a Word attachment). The corrected text is then seen by a *Nature* subeditor, who creates a typeset proof that is sent to the author as a pdf for a further check. Diagrams produced by the *Nature* art department are sent to authors as jpeg files for checking.

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What readers say

News & Views is a very popular section of *Nature*. But surveys of readers show that they struggle with unfamiliar jargon or concepts, even in disciplines close to their own. Overuse of abbreviations or acronyms is a particular problem in some subjects. All News & Views authors want to ensure that their article is technically correct and thought-provoking for those in the field concerned. This is indeed essential — the reader surveys show that one strength of News & Views is its authoritativeness. But the surveys also show that when care is taken to identify difficult terms or concepts, and then to avoid or explain them as appropriate, articles can meet that aim yet appeal to a much wider audience.