

GUIDE FOR AUTHORS

The SKEPTICAL INQUIRER promotes scientific inquiry, critical investigation, and the use of evidence and reason in examining controversial and extraordinary claims. We encourage the scientific outlook, science and scientific inquiry, critical thinking, and the methods of science in examining important issues. We are best known for our critical examinations of claims of paranormal, fringe-science, and pseudoscientific phenomena, but our scope also includes scientific or investigative examinations of a wide variety of science-related public issues. Issues of broad public importance are of potential interest as long as they involve science and reason. Our subtitle, "The Magazine for Science and Reason," accurately conveys our focus and outlook.

We seek well-written articles, reviews, and columns from knowledgeable leaders in science, psychology, the social sciences, philosophy, medicine, education, and technology. Contributions by investigative writers and science writers are also wanted.

The SKEPTICAL INQUIRER'S readership includes scholars and researchers in many fields and general readers of diverse backgrounds. Potential SI authors should write clearly, interestingly, and simply. Avoid unnecessary technical terms. Maintain a factual, professional, and restrained tone. All submissions are judged on interest, authority, clarity, significance, relevance, and topicality.

CATEGORIES, TOPICS, AND GENERAL INFORMATION

Categories of contributions include: Featured Articles, Book Reviews, News and Comments, Commentaries, Special Reports, Forum Columns, Research Reports, Follow-Ups, and Letters to the Editor. We have begun giving increased priority to shorter, timely pieces on topical issues of broad public interest and importance.

Articles may be evaluative, investigative, or explanatory. They may examine specific claims or broader questions. Well-focused discussions on scientific, educational, or social issues of wide common interest are welcome. Critical, evidence-based examinations of popular pseudo-scientific, fringe-science, or paranormal claims are our forte. We also welcome articles that draw on new information from recent scientific studies or bring fresh perspective to familiar subjects. Well-balanced articles are especially sought that report on and evaluate controversial scientific claims and issues along the fringes of science—or sometimes even within science—and on topics where there is a large gap between scientific understanding and public understanding. We also seek articles that help people find natural explanations for unusual personal experiences, portray the vigor and excitement of a particular scientific question, or help readers distinguish between scientific and pseudoscientific approaches.

The SKEPTICAL INQUIRER must be a source of authoritative, responsible scientific information and perspective. The Editor will often send manuscripts dealing with technical or controversial matters to reviewers. The authors, however, are responsible for the accuracy of fact and perspective. We advise having knowledgeable colleagues review drafts before submission. Our Editorial Board, CSI Fellows, and Scientific Consultants also include many experts who may be able to preview your manuscript. Reports of original research, especially highly technical experimental or statistical studies, are best submitted to a formal scientific journal, although a *nontechnical* summary may be submitted to the SKEPTICAL INQUIRER. Adaptations from certain important forthcoming books are occasionally published; when adapting, please make sure any references are in our style and all other guidelines are followed.

Because the SKEPTICAL INQUIRER is a bimonthly publication, space is always at a premium. Articles should be organized around one central point or theme and be succinct. Our space for Feature Articles has diminished in recent years as we have expanded our number of regular columnists. Many submissions cannot be accepted, and many accepted articles have to await publication space. You may query the editors before submitting to ensure there is potential interest or to make sure your topic is not too closely related to something already accepted. Unsolicited manuscripts are welcome, but they should be accompanied by information relevant for us in evaluating the manuscript.

A note about religion: We are a magazine of "science and reason." Where religion is concerned, our main emphasis is on topics in which empirical, scientific, testable claims are made. We are especially interested in scholarly and scientific studies offering new analyses and *new data* (e.g., from major new polls and surveys) on religious belief and its effects. Personal essays and articles outlining one's views and opinions about religious matters are of less interest, unless strongly science-related or offering something particularly noteworthy or newsworthy. We occasionally publish special issues on science and religion, with invited articles by noted authorities, but again the emphasis is on religion's intersection with science.

All Manuscripts

In the upper right of the first page indicate what SI category you intend the piece for and give the electronic word count, including any References and Notes, for the manuscript. On that page provide your article title, byline, a one- to three-sentence suggested author bio note that gives relevant affiliations and credentials, and your email address. (If it is intended as a Feature article or Special Report, provide a succinct abstract/deck under the title as described below.) If you do not wish us to publish your email address at the end

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of your bio note, please advise. On either the first or last page also provide your full mailing address (for our author database and for mailing complimentary copies upon publication) and any other contact information. You may also submit a brief cover letter providing any other information about yourself or your topic relevant to consideration.

Feature Articles

Feature articles are typically 2,000 to 3,200 words (about 8 to 12 double-spaced manuscript pages in a standard 12 pt. font). Longer manuscripts can seldom be used. They should have a title page giving a short, inviting title followed by a succinct, twenty- to thirty-word "abstract" statement of the article's main point or theme. We call this a "deck." This will be printed in display type on the first page of the published article and is sometimes used as a summary on the Table of Contents page. Include your byline as you want it used in print, a suggested author bio, and an email address for editorial and reader correspondence. The title page should also give full mailing addresses and other contact information for all authors, plus a word count including references. The manuscript should be accompanied by a brief cover note stating that the article has not been submitted elsewhere and providing any other essential background for the Editor.

Book Reviews

We publish reviews of new or recently published books. You may query the editors first to ensure interest and to avoid duplication. Most book reviews are about 600 to 1,000 words. Include publication data at the top of the review in this order: Title. By Author. Publisher, City, Year. ISBN. Number of pages. Hardcover or softcover, price.

News and Comment

News articles from 250 to 1,000 words are welcome. They should involve timely events and issues and be written in interpretative journalistic style. Use third person. The news sections of *Nature*, *Science*, *New Scientist*, and *Science News* are excellent models. Balance, fairness, and perspective are important. No end references.

Commentaries

These are invited commentaries by noted experts about urgent, topical issues of broad public importance. Length is about 800 to 1,200 words. Most are invited, but queries from well-known authorities and authors are welcome.

Special Reports

These tend to be newsy, topical, timely reports, longer than a News and Comment article but shorter than a feature article. Typical length 1,200 to 1,500 words. Only a few references, if any.

Forum Columns

The Forum column consists of brief, lively, well-written columns of generally no more than 1,000 words. Space allows only one or two per issue, at most.

Research Reviews

Research reviews are occasional evaluative reports providing perspective on a newly published journal article of significance. They are written by authorities in the field. Generally about 1,200 words.

Follow-Ups

The Follow-Up column is for response from those whose work or claims have been criticized in previous articles. The original authors may respond in the same or a later issue.

Letters to the Editor

Letters to the Editor are for views on matters raised in previous issues. Letters should be no more than 225 words. Due to the volume of letters received, not all can be published. Those selected may be edited for space and clarity. Authors criticized in the letters column may be given the opportunity to respond in the same issue. Submit Letters to the Editor by email text (not attachment) to letters@csicop.org. In the subject line, provide your surname and informative identification, e.g., "Smith letter on Jones evolution article." Include your name and address (City, State) at the end of the letter.

FORMAT REQUIREMENTS

Text

Manuscripts should be prepared using a standard electronic word-processing program (preferably Word). Text should have at least one-inch margins on all sides. Indent the first line of all paragraphs. Do not add an extra line between paragraphs. Add only one character space between sentences. Number all pages in sequence, including those for references, figures, and captions.

Please name your submitted electronic document beginning with your surname followed by a hyphen, several key words from your title, and type of submission (Feature Article, Review, Forum, etc.). Email the Word document as an attachment to a brief email cover note to the Editor that gives the article title or subject and any information important for evaluation. Any photos and artwork should also be in electronic form as separate attached documents of at least 300 dpi resolution. (Art may also be supplied after acceptance.)

References and Notes

Our authors come from many different fields of science and scholarship, each typically with its own journal citation and reference style. To avoid a jumble of styles, we ask SI authors to use the single author-date style we have long used. It is a very slight adaptation of the author-date system of documentation for the

physical, natural, and social sciences of *The Chicago Manual of Style* (Chapter 15 of the current 16th edition). We've found it sensible and practical. Citations and References must be formatted in this style. Manuscripts with references in other styles may be rejected or returned for revision; this always results in delays. Here are the key elements (consult recent SI issues for other examples): Sources are cited in the text, usually in parentheses, by author's last name and year of publication (with no comma between). Examples: (Smith and Jones 2008). Or (Smith and Jones 2008, 37) to add the page number. (Sanders et al. 2008) for three or more authors. Multiple: (Watkins 2008, 2007; Foley and Masterson 2004; Hsu 2006). These text citations are amplified at the end of the manuscript in a list of References (alphabetized by last name of first author), which gives full bibliographic information in the style shown below. Second and subsequent authors' names are in natural order, first names or initials first. If more than three authors, list first three authors' names and add "et al." Pay particular attention to the details of punctuation. No ampersands. No parentheses around the year of publication. No punctuation after journal names. Colon and space between volume (issue number) and page numbers. Give full names of journals, not abbreviations. In titles of journal articles, use sentence-style capitalization: capitalize only first word, first word after a subtitle, and proper nouns. Italicize book titles and journal titles. Do not use quotation marks around article titles. For works without authors, start with title, not "anonymous."

Sample book entry:

Smith, John, Jane Jones, and J.T. Thompson. 2012. *A Skeptical Book*. New York: Jones Press.

Sample journal article entries:

Smith, John, Jane Jones, and J.T. Thompson. 2012. A skeptical article. *The Journal of Studies in Science and Skepticism* 9(1): 7–12.

Carlson, J.T., W. Shimizu, E. Tyler, et al. 2008. Name of article. *New England Journal of Medicine* 356(14): 933–44.

Institutional Author, website:

Institute of Medicine. 2004. Immunization Safety Review: Vaccines and Autism. May 17. Available at www.iom.edu/cms/3793/4705/20115.aspx.

Sample blog entry:

Smith, Jane. 2012. Skipping down skeptical lane (blog entry). *A Skeptical Blog* (March 2). Available at www.skepticalblog.net/skip-ping-down.

Sample newspaper article:

Lennon, L. 2012. A newspaper article about skepticism. *New York Times* (March 17). Available at www.fakenyt.net/skepticism.

Use numerical endnotes (not footnotes), labeled "Notes," for explaining or amplifying discussions in the text. Notes should be minimized. If these Notes contain citations, the citations should be in author-date style.

Illustrations

Figures and graphs should be submitted electronically in high resolution (at least 300 dpi) as JPEG files. Assign each illustration a Figure number and supply captions on a separate page of the manuscript. Suggestions for other illustrations are welcome.

SUBMITTAL INSTRUCTIONS

Unless otherwise requested, all manuscripts should be emailed to:

Kendrick Frazier, Editor, Skeptical Inquirer
Email: kendrickfrazier@comcast.net

If instead you must mail your hard-copy submission (not preferred), include both a printed double-spaced manuscript and a CD or DVD carrying the text and any images. The mailing address is:

Kendrick Frazier
Editor, Skeptical Inquirer
944 Deer Dr. NE
Albuquerque, NM 87122 U.S.A.

Fax: 505-828-2080

Here is contact information for other editors:

Benjamin Radford, Deputy Editor
bradford@centerforinquiry.net
Ben Radford is involved in most every aspect of the editorial process and may also be consulted at any point.

Julia Lavarney, Managing Editor
jlavarney@centerforinquiry.net

Julia Lavarney is at our editorial production office at our Committee for Skeptical Inquiry headquarters in Amherst, New York, and generally becomes involved with an author once a manuscript has been accepted for publication and is in editorial production. Please do not use the Amherst address for initial submittal of manuscripts.

Proofs

Once the manuscript of an article, review, or column has been tentatively scheduled, edited, copyedited, and typeset, our Amherst editorial production office will email proofs to you. If required, an author photo will be requested from you at this time. Corrections should generally be returned within 72 hours by email (preferred), fax, telephone, or postal mail.

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