

Rubric for Writers of *Sport Journal* Submissions

The editorial board of *The Sport Journal* weighs the merits of articles submitted for publication in terms of eight criteria:

- introduction of topic
- information and evidence presented
- support for author's ideas
- sequential development of ideas
- conclusion
- use of standard English
- APA-style reference citations and reference list
- APA-style manuscript preparation

The fifth edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* contains explicit instructions about style (see especially chapters 3–5). The editorial board looks for these conventions in submitted work.

But matters of style cannot be considered ahead of an article's substance. The *Publication Manual* can be of help here, too. Its first chapter presents standards for article content, including a short checklist for evaluating whether research actually merits being reported (pp. 5–6). The section “Parts of a Manuscript” (pp. 10–27) is an excellent guide to organizing the composition. The section “Writing Style” (p. 31) presents tips on such crucial requirements as orderly presentation of ideas and written expression that is smooth, concise, precise, and above all clear. The *Publication Manual* also includes sample tables and even sample papers providing writers with correct models.

The following rubric was devised by United States Sports Academy faculty members in 2008 and reflects the eight criteria. When considering submitted articles, the editorial board assigns a number of points for each criterion, based on a submitted article's strengths and weaknesses. These strengths and weaknesses are specified in the rubric.

Criterion 1, Introduction of Topic (40 points possible)

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Insufficiently specific, rambling, and/or irrelevant introduction failing to communicate topic and subtopics. An arguable thesis is absent. <i>0–27 points</i>	Adequate introduction that states topic and some subtopics. Intent of article is clear and a fairly arguable thesis appears. <i>28–31 points</i>	Proficient introduction that states topic and all subtopics in order. A very clear, arguable, and well-developed thesis appears. <i>32–35 points</i>	Exceptional introduction that creates reader interest as it states topic and all subtopics in order. An exceptionally clear, arguable, and well-developed thesis appears. <i>36–40 points</i>

Criterion 2, Information and Evidence Presented (70 points possible)

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Lack of detailed reporting of research and/or lack of accurate evidence supporting the thesis results in little useful information. <i>0–48 points</i>	Some aspects of topic are adequately researched. Accurate evidence supporting the thesis is presented, but in a limited fashion. <i>49–55 points</i>	Paper is well researched and supplies detailed evidence in support of the thesis, from a variety of significant sources. <i>56–62 points</i>	Paper is exceptionally well researched, extremely detailed, and historically accurate. It supplies strong evidence in support of the thesis, from a wide variety of significant sources. <i>63–70 points</i>

Criterion 3, Support for Author's Ideas (70 points possible)

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Little rationale is given for statements made and positions taken. <i>0–48 points</i>	Some plausible rationale is given for statements made and positions taken. <i>49–55 points</i>	Pertinent and consistent rationale is given for most statements made and positions taken. <i>56–62 points</i>	Exceptionally convincing rationale is given for all statements made and positions taken. <i>63–70 points</i>

Criterion 4, Sequential Development of Ideas (40 points possible)

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Lacks clear, logical development of ideas. <i>0–27 points</i>	Some clear, logical development of ideas is evident, in an ordered sequence linked by transitions between paragraphs and topics. <i>28–31 points</i>	Clear, logical development of ideas is evident, in a well-developed sequence with good transitions between paragraphs and topics. <i>32–35 points</i>	Very clear, logical development of ideas is evident, in a convincing sequence using exceptionally strong transitions between paragraphs and topics. <i>36–40 points</i>

Criterion 5, Conclusion (70 points possible)

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Absent or cursory summary of (and/or concluding remarks on) topic and findings. Recommendations for further research and/or implications for policy are missing or perfunctory. <i>0–48 points</i>	Adequate summary of (and/or concluding remarks on) topic and findings, with some meaningful recommendations and/or implications. <i>49–55 points</i>	Effective summary of topic and findings, followed by appropriate concluding remarks and recommendations that have an influence on the reader. <i>56–62 points</i>	Excellent summary of topic and findings, followed by appropriate concluding remarks and recommendations that inspire the reader to further inquiry. <i>63–70 points</i>

Criterion 6, Use of Standard English (30 points possible)

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Standard English grammar, punctuation, and spelling are used inconsistently throughout the article. <i>0–20 points</i>	Article exhibits a limited number of deviations from standard English grammar, punctuation, and spelling. <i>21–23 points</i>	Prose communicates clearly; standard English grammar, punctuation, and spelling appear consistently throughout the paper. <i>24–26 points</i>	Prose is exceptionally clear and readable. Adept use of standard English grammar, punctuation, and spelling characterizes the paper. <i>27–30 points</i>

Criterion 7, Reputable Sources & APA-Style Reference Citations & List (30 points possible for Criteria 7 & 8 together)

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
<p>Citation of the sources of ideas and information is incomplete; format of any citations that do appear is often incorrect. No primary source is a peer-reviewed professional journal. 0–20 points (7 +8)</p>	<p>Ideas and information drawn from others’ work are usually properly attributed and usually in the correct APA format. About half of the sources are peer-reviewed professional journals. 21–23 points (7 +8)</p>	<p>Citation of others’ ideas and information is always properly attributed and characteristically conforms to the APA citation system. About 75% of the sources are peer-reviewed professional journals. Formatting is completely correct. 24–26 points (7 +8)</p>	<p>Others’ ideas and information are always properly attributed, and citation conforms to the APA system. At least 90% of the sources are peer-reviewed professional journals, and there is an excellent variety of sources. 27–30 points (7 +8)</p>

Criterion 8, APA-Style Manuscript Preparation (30 points possible for Criteria 7 & 8 together)

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
<p>Lacks APA-styled title page, abstract, author note, and/or tables/figures, or format otherwise deviates from APA requirements. 0–20 points (7 +8)</p>	<p>Some APA-prescribed elements of manuscript are missing (e.g., title page, abstract, author note), or paper in some other way deviates from APA-prescribed format. 21–23 points (7 +8)</p>	<p>Manuscript is complete per APA manual guidelines and features correct formatting with very few minor exceptions. 24–26 points (7 +8)</p>	<p>Complete manuscript with completely correct formatting. 27–30 points (7 +8)</p>