

From the Executive and Principal Editors:

Thank you for accepting to act as Guest Editor for an issue of *Elements* magazine. We truly appreciate your willingness to undertake this project. This document gives the deadlines and responsibilities that you have, and the points of contact with the Executive and the Principal Editor assigned to your issue. The Executive Editor will set up a Conference Call with yourself and the assigned Principal Editor. We look forward to working with you!

Deadlines

A schedule of “Deadlines and Actions” for which Guest Editors are responsible will be sent to you. Important deadlines will be inserted by the Executive Editor for your issue of *Elements*. You have, of course, some flexibility in all deadlines except the dates by which revised manuscripts have to be with the Executive Editor. We would be very pleased if an agreed upon schedule could be reached as far in advance of the deadline as possible.

It is most important that authors are made fully aware of the deadlines that they have to meet, and the space constraints to which they must conform. Because of its thematic character, *Elements* has to adhere to a tightly defined and carefully planned production schedule without the freedom of conventional journals to hold back or accelerate articles.

A copy of ‘**Instructions to Authors**’ has been sent to you. **The Executive Editor will complete an “Author Deadlines and Actions” form after the conference call.** You can either send it to the authors or have the Executive Editor do it. **We strongly encourage you to talk in person or by phone with each lead author to stress deadlines, level of writing, and word count limit.** Note that you must provide an introductory article (guidelines below) and you may, if you wish, also contribute a normal article to the issue. The author instructions are also available on the *Elements*’ website (<http://www.elementsmagazine.org>).

Length Guidelines

- The ideal total length of your thematic section will be 36 *Elements* pages, corresponding to approximately 36,000 words. However, we will accept up to a maximum of 40 *Elements* pages.
- Any figure or table, not including its caption, counts as 250 words. References and captions must be included in the word count. Maximum 30 references per article which is approximately 600 words.

- Except under exceptional circumstances, your issue will consist of 5 thematic articles plus your introduction. If you have any concerns with the page allocation, please contact the Executive Editor.
- **Make sure your authors are fully aware of the length restriction.** Authors should write, from the outset, to fit the space allocated as exactly as possible. We have discovered that reviewers often suggest additions to articles, which tend to increase in length after revision. It is therefore preferable if the first version is a little shorter than assigned space.

Illustrations and Cover

Elements is published in full color and authors should be encouraged to provide exciting illustrations, either color photographs or high quality, colored computer-generated drawings. Detailed instructions for electronic submission are given in the **Instructions to Authors**. Individual authors and institutions may vary considerably in their ability to produce high-quality graphics. If you feel that illustrations have been submitted that are good in concept but fall short in quality of execution please get in touch with the Executive Editor as early as possible. Think carefully about a dramatic cover design (each issue is different), using either one of your own images or one submitted by an author. Contact the Executive Editor with your suggestions as soon as they crystallize.

Introductory Article

Your introductory article would normally be 4000 to 6000 words (including all the references, captions, figures, etc.), and should provide an overview of the theme of your issue, perhaps with some historical background and some speculation about future developments. It should put the main articles into context but should not simply be a summary of their content. Its main objective is to draw potential readers into the magazine, including Earth scientists who perhaps do not consider themselves to be primarily mineralogists, geochemists, or petrologists. Your introductory article should include a 100 word **abstract** as described in the **Instructions to Authors**.

General Guidelines

1. The **target audience** of *Elements* is much broader than that of a typical research paper. Writing at a level that is accessible and pleasurable for this large audience, while remaining up-to-date, scholarly and rigorous, is a challenging task. Our target audience includes members of the participating societies; academic and industrial scientists in other disciplines (materials scientists, physicists, chemists, environmental geoscientists, geophysicists); students in the geosciences; popular science writers; funding agencies and policy makers. *Elements* is published in full color, and you should encourage the use of exciting illustrations that draw the

casual reader into articles. In our normal technical writing we individually inhabit a familiar world of jargon, buzz-words, acronyms, and notations. Try to stand back a little and consider whether the terms and conventions your authors are using are really familiar to your target readers, and that they adopt a tutorial style where required.

2. As Guest Editor, you are free to **cover the field as you think appropriate**, and you may select those expert authors you feel can write in a way accessible to non-specialists and who will meet your deadlines.
3. In **selecting authors**, consider choosing a balance of contributors from industry, universities, and government labs. We also encourage you to consider authors from countries other than your own. We expect that, in general, each paper will have a single, well known author. The Principal Editors regard it as essential that lead authors are well known experts in the field. Each invited author must be prepared to be the lead author; if they are not prepared to take this responsibility the Guest Editor should consider finding another distinguished lead author. If a lead author feels that additional authors are unavoidable, we would not expect more than two co-authors. Authors should be encouraged to include close collaborators in an acknowledgements section.
4. Experience with *Elements* shows that a common problem is getting first drafts of articles that significantly exceed mandated lengths. The Guest Editor should make clear, by telephone if possible, that **length limits must be adhered to strictly**. The receipt of a manuscript that is significantly too long should prompt the Guest Editor to **return the manuscript to the author for shortening before review**. *As noted above, paper lengths often increase after reviewing and a first draft slightly shorter than the assigned space should be welcomed.*
5. It is desirable to secure **balanced coverage of your subject** with little overlap among the contributions and to avoid the need for major last-minute revisions at the time you receive manuscripts. To facilitate this process, each contributor is requested in the Instructions to Authors to send you a preliminary abstract or outline within one month (or shorter). You can then advise authors on what should be added or deleted. It may be helpful to circulate these abstracts to all authors in the issue.
6. If your issue is likely to contain a significant number of **mathematical symbols** or acronyms you may find it useful to provide a 'style sheet' for the information of all authors from the outset.
7. It is possible that particular **acronyms, notations, or specialized words** are used (and explained repeatedly) by your authors. To save space and tedious repetition you might consider putting an 'information' or 'glossary' box in the introduction. Remember that your authors are addressing a wide and not necessarily expert audience. For example, conventions such as the 'del' notation for stable isotopes, epsilon Nd, a phase diagram or unfamiliar mineral names and formulae might come into this category.
8. **Reviewing articles:** *Elements* articles must be reviewed by yourself, by two independent expert reviewers suggested by yourself and by the Principal Editor

Instructions For Guest Editors



assigned to your issue. Try to ensure that your expert reviewers have a good feel for English written in a more popular style. Please forward each article by e-mail to the independent reviewers and to the relevant Principal Editor **as soon as you receive it**. Send a copy of the *Elements Referee Request Letter* to the independent reviewers. Many referees like to make corrections and comments on a hard copy of the manuscript, and they are invited to do this, but please bear in mind that there are time issues if the reviewer or the author are in a country other than your own.

9. **Role of Principal Editor:** Unless they happen to have expert knowledge of a topic, the Principal Editor will be concerned mainly with the general level of the article, the attractiveness of illustrations and its accessibility to non-specialists. He or she will send you their comments as soon as they have read the manuscript. You should consider these and the comments of the independent reviewers, and forward your final decisions and recommendations to the author (or first author) as soon as you can. If you have any scientific problems with the paper you should discuss them with the Principal Editor. Technical problems (for example with figures) should be discussed with the Executive Editor.
10. The authors should **submit the revised manuscript** to you as soon as possible before the final deadline. You should check that requested changes have been made, and when satisfied immediately forward the article and its illustrations electronically to the Executive Editor and the Principal Editor. *You should not wait until all the articles in your issue have been sent in their final form.*

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