

Elements Author Guidelines

Thank you for accepting the invitation to write for Elements magazine! We hope that you will find it a rewarding experience. The Elements team looks forward to partnering with you over the coming months to bring your articles into the hands of over 17,000 readers and 1000+ libraries worldwide.

Writing for *Elements* differs significantly from writing for the technical scientific journals with which you are familiar. **Please read these instructions carefully before you begin writing your article.**

What is unique to writing for *Elements*?

Time

Elements adheres to a **tight production schedule** without the freedom to hold back, swap, or accelerate issues. It is necessary that you meet the required deadlines provided to you by the Guest Editors.

Space

You have a **fixed space** (defined by the number of words) for your article. Consider this as your “canvas” and design your article from the outset to fit this space, including illustrations. Do not plan to shorten your paper after review. Typical final printed six-page articles have ~4000 words of text, plus 3–6 figures/tables, acknowledgments, figure captions, and references. If you have fewer figures/tables, you can have more text. The maximum number of references is limited to 30. This is a hard number that cannot be negotiated. Similarly, the abstract is limited to a maximum of 120 words.

Scope & Target

Elements articles are to be **reviews and syntheses** of the current state of your field not venues to release new research results. Articles commonly present new images and figures, sometimes annotated or accompanied with minor new quantitative information, but these are to illustrate current understanding, or point to new research applications and directions, rather than supporting previously unvetted interpretations or conclusions.

The **target audience** of *Elements* is broader than that of a typical research paper. The audience includes academic and industrial scientists in a variety of disciplines, students, popular science writers, officials of funding agencies, and policy makers. This is your opportunity to promote the excitement of your field to a diverse readership. Writing at a level that is accessible and pleasurable for this audience—while remaining up-to-date, scholarly, and rigorous—can be a challenging task. We encourage you to stand back from what you have written and consider whether its level is appropriate for *Elements'* readership, particularly limit your use of specialized words and jargon. Remember, *Elements* is published in full color, so please use exciting and colorful illustrations that draw the casual reader into your article.

Review Cycles

Each *Elements* article goes through multiple revision cycles. First, the article will be evaluated for scientific content by the Guest Editor(s) and two (or more) independent

expert reviewers. Second, the Principal Editor assigned to the issue will review the article in terms of suitability for *Elements*' readership, style, and context with the rest of the articles in the issue. The third review cycle occurs when the article is copyedited for language usage, grammar, and readability. Finally, authors will review a set of proofs. These multiple cycles ensure that the review article will be well received by the *Elements* readership and be of interest to the larger scientific community.



Writing Your Article

Authorship *Elements* articles are relatively short reviews by acknowledged experts. We expect that most articles will have a single lead author, and not more than four co-authors. You can refer to close collaborators in the text or in an Acknowledgements section at the end of your article.

Title Use a short, punchy title without technical terms that will attract non-expert readers.

Title Image *Elements* uses a banner image or photograph behind the title that is related to the content. Please provide an eye-catching image for this space. Image should be in color, have 300 dpi, and be at least 2200 × 750 pixels in size.

Abstract The abstract (<120 words) should summarize the content of your article so that (1) readers can determine their interest in reading further, (2) literature searches will find the article in relevant searches, (3) a broad audience can appreciate the significance of the article. The abstract should be complete and understandable in itself, and should avoid technical words unsuitable for a wide audience. Do not include references, figures, tables, or equations in the abstract.

Keywords Please provide at least four keywords that will enhance access to your paper. *Elements* is indexed by Google and other online search engines so good keywords help readers find your article.

Language Guidelines

- Use either American or British English spelling and conventions, but please be consistent and do not combine the two.
- Consider your target audience described on p. 1 with great care, and where appropriate give your article a tutorial character.
- Avoid jargon and acronyms. Terms unfamiliar to the non-specialist should be defined or explained clearly in plain language. To avoid repetition in issues

where the same specialized terms, acronyms, or mathematical conventions are introduced repeatedly, the Guest Editors may decide to include a general explanatory section in their introductory article—or as a separate 1–2 page *Elements* Toolkit, thus releasing space for the other articles.

- Carefully consider whether your language choice is comprehensible to our wide target audience. Be especially careful where ordinary words or phrases, such as “enrichment,” “productivity”, or “ultra-high pressure” have been given limited technical meanings by specialist groups.

Manuscript Length

- *Elements* articles should fit well onto six printed pages. Manuscripts that are longer than the space assigned are not acceptable.
 - A single printed page in *Elements* contains ~1000 words. A figure or table that fills $\frac{1}{4}$ of page in size accounts for approximately 250 effective words.
 - Please use the provided Article Length Estimation Calculator.

Manuscript Style

- Please follow formatting guidelines provided in the Author Template at the end of this document.
- Please use continuous line numbers.
- *Elements* uses three heading levels
 - **BOLD CAPITALS**
 - ***Bold italics***
 - *Normal italics* set into the first line of text.
- Use standard SI units.
- Define terms in mathematical equations. If possible use symbols that correspond with common usage in *American Mineralogist*, *Geochimica et Cosmochimica Acta*, or *Clays and Clay Minerals*.
- We follow the recommendations of the International Mineralogical Association with regards to mineral nomenclature and the spelling of mineral names. See <http://www.mineralogicalassociation.ca/doc/abstracts/ima98/ima98.htm>

Tables and Figures

Take advantage of the fact that *Elements* will be published in color. Create striking figures. Authors are encouraged to read Barb Dutrow’s article in *Elements* volume 3, issue 2, p. 119–126, for tips on producing effective figures.

- Please use the following naming convention for your figures and tables: First author’s last name_Fig# (e.g., Green_Fig1.jpg)
- Create high-resolution images (300 dpi at published size) or line drawings (preferably colored) at 600 dpi.
- Save color in CYMK. *Remember that almost 10% of the population is color blind*—combining blue and red (or orange) fit well, whereas red + green is to be avoided.
- Embed all fonts.

- Preferred file formats: PDF, JPG, TIFF, AI, EPS
- Captions: provide sufficient detail in the caption (with each panel described individually) so that a reader can understand the figure without having to refer back to the associated text. Describe all colors, elements, and features.
- Image sources must be listed. Please see copyright information on next page.

References

Space restrictions do not allow extensive lists of references. A maximum of 30 references should be provided, many of which might be to technical reviews in the field. *Elements* has a reference style involving minimum punctuation and no changes of font. Examples are given in the Article Template and on the final page of this document.

- References should only be to titles published or accepted for publication. Personal communications should be noted only in the text, e.g. (pers com, JC Maxwell 2004).
- In the text, references should be cited by author and year, e.g. (Newton 2004); (Newton and Darwin 2004); Newton et al. (in press). List in order of publication (youngest to oldest).
- The reference list should include all works cited in the text, figures, and tables. Citations should be in alphabetical order with respect to last name. With identical names, arrange papers numerically started with the oldest. Papers with more than two authors (which will appear as 'et al.' in the text) arrange in order of first author and year of publication. Where more than one paper in a single year has the same authorship, the reference year should be amended with an a, b, c, etc. (e.g. 2004a, 2004b) both in the text and the reference list.
- Journal titles should be written out in full (e.g. *Geochimica et Cosmochimica Acta*, *Contributions to Mineralogy and Petrology*).

Articles

Sio CKI, Dauphas N (2017) Thermal and crystallization histories of magmatic bodies by Monte Carlo inversion of Mg-Fe isotopic profiles in olivine. *Geology* 45: 67-70, doi: [10.1130/G38056.1](https://doi.org/10.1130/G38056.1)

Sio CKI and 5 coauthors (2013) Discerning crystal growth from diffusion profiles in zoned olivine by in situ Mg-Fe isotopic analyses. *Geochimica et Cosmochimica Acta* 123: 302-321, doi: [10.1016/j.gca.2013.06.008](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gca.2013.06.008)

Chapter in a Book

Schoene B (2014) U-Th-Pb geochronology. In: Turekian HDHK (ed) *Treatise on Geochemistry*, Volume 4 (Second Edition). Elsevier, Oxford, pp 341-378, doi: [10.1016/B978-0-08-095975-7.00310-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-08-095975-7.00310-7)

Book

Harrison TM (2020) *Hadean Earth*. Springer International Publishing, 291 pp, doi: [10.1007/978-3-030-46687-9](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-46687-9)

Author Biographies

Each issue of *Elements* contains a “Meet the Authors” page, which highlights the authors of the thematic articles. When submitting your initial manuscript to the Guest Editors, each author should also provide:

- A short biographical sketch (<100 words) written in the third person;
- A headshot photograph

Supplemental Material

As an author, your priority is to make your article in the magazine complete and comprehensive. Nevertheless, there may be a need to publish supplemental material such as teaching exercises, videos, data sets, etc. If this is of interest to you, please contact your Guest Editors and the Executive Editor.

Copyrights and Permissions

Ideally, the illustrations, images, and tables that you publish will be new material designed specifically for the *Elements* audience. However, it is also possible that you will want to reuse or modify previously published figures and or tables.

As the author, you are responsible for obtaining permission to reuse or modify existing figures and/or tables. This is also true for material that you have authored. Do not assume that work with your name on it is owned by you! Each publishing house has different standards and you should verify the copyright restrictions before reuse of a figure or table.

You are also responsible for any charges associated with these permissions. *Please use extra caution when using figures found on the internet.* There are often royalties or copyright restrictions associated with their usage. If you have questions about whether you need to obtain permission or how to obtain permission, please contact the Executive Editor.

***Don't wait until the last minute to obtain permission.
Please complete this process while you are writing your article.***

DO YOU NEED PERMISSION?

- YES when you make a copy (photocopy, digital scan, download) of published figure or table or image. Request permission and add the copyright permission information in the figure caption.
- YES when you make a copy (photocopy, digital scan, download) and make minor changes to the fonts to make it look nicer or add a single data point, etc. Request permission and add the copyright permission information in the figure caption.
- MAYBE if the figure is yours but published elsewhere. In some cases, you hold the copyright, in others the publisher does. You need to check this!
- NO if your figure is a significantly modified version of a figure that was previously published. These modifications include significant redrawing schematics, addition of data, omission of data, etc. In this case, give reference to the figure inspiration by adding a phrase such as (modified after Duff et al. 1999).
- NO if the figure is an original work of yours not previously published elsewhere.
- A special note about images on the internet: Do not assume that if you can download the image then it is free to use. Carefully check to see if there are copyright restrictions about their usage.

I NEED COPYRIGHT PERMISSION, NOW WHAT DO I DO?

- You (not the Guest Editors nor the Executive Editor!) must obtain permission from the publisher and/or copyright holder.
- Some publishing houses will charge you to use a figure. You are responsible for any charges.
- Permission must be granted prior to publication in Elements. Request permission from the copyright owner when you decide to use the figure/table in your article. The earlier, the better!
- To obtain permission, use the online submission forms available at the publisher web sites. Often these forms can be found as “Get Permission” links from an article web page or through the [Copyright Clearance Center](#).
- Send copies of the authorized permissions to the Executive Editor.
- Please compile a list of the permission requests you have made and send it to the Executive Editor. Indicate which permissions have been received and those that are pending.

ACKNOWLEDGING COPIED FIGURES & TABLES

All figures/tables requiring permission MUST have its copyright information acknowledged in the caption of that figure/table using the following format: [Used by permission of Publishing Company, from Author (YEAR)].

Checklist for *Elements* Authors and Guest Editors

Please confirm the following items for EACH thematic article in your issue of *Elements*.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	ARTICLE ITEMS/CONTENT
<input type="checkbox"/>	Title – short, engaging, catchy
<input type="checkbox"/>	Author(s) – full name, affiliation address, and email included
<input type="checkbox"/>	Abstract <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • maximum 120 words • this is a summary of the article—not an intro paragraph
<input type="checkbox"/>	Keywords – 4–6 words
<input type="checkbox"/>	Text style <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written as a magazine review article, not a scientific journal article. • Does the article present a good introduction to this subject for someone unfamiliar with the topic? • Can it be understood by an upper-level undergraduate student? • Is there a logical “flow” to the article? Does it move smoothly from one paragraph/section to the next? • Is it too technical? Boring? Wordy?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Jargon (words used only by a specific group/discipline) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should be avoided • If used, check that the words are clearly defined using simple language
<input type="checkbox"/>	Figures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High-resolution (fonts are smooth, concise lines/arrows, crisp images, etc.) • Eye catching, colorful, informative • Color usage (Can the color blind discern the relevant features? Avoid usage of color as the sole mechanism for conveying information.) • Title image (banner) provided
<input type="checkbox"/>	Figure captions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address each panel in the figure • Figure & caption can stand alone without associated text
<input type="checkbox"/>	References <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximum 30 • Confirm that any references in tables/figures are included in reference list
<input type="checkbox"/>	Word count (for six-page article) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximum = 5500 words, including all the text, abstract, titles, acknowledgments, references, captions, and 200–250 words per figure/table
	OTHER ASSOCIATED ITEMS
<input type="checkbox"/>	Biographical sketch and photo provided for each author
<input type="checkbox"/>	Signed forms <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • License to publish • Pro forma invoice (if contributing to costs of your article or ordering extra copies)

Article Template: Your Title Should Be Short and Punchy

Author A. Ready¹ and Author B. Timely²

ABSTRACT

Your abstract should no more than **120 words**. It should give an accurate description of the article and state the main messages you would like the reader to come away with. The abstract also acts as a come-on: if it is clear and sharp, readers will be more likely to trust the findings and read on. As many *Elements* readers are undergraduate students, interested mineral collectors, scientists working in industry, high school teachers interested in self-educating in the Earth and planetary sciences, and journalists—try to convey the main messages of your article in terms accessible to non-specialist readers.

KEYWORDS: choose at least four keywords for indexing purposes, separated by semi-colons.

INTRODUCTION

In this template, we will guide you through the writing of your article. We suggest you start with this file to write your article. This way, you will be using the right level headings, right font size, etc. We thank you for the attention you will pay to these instructions.

WRITING YOUR ARTICLE

Naming of File

¹ Company/Institution/Department for author 1
City, State/Province Zip/Mailing Code, Country
E-mail:

² Company/Institution/Department for author 2
City, State/Province Zip/Mailing Code, Country
E-mail:

Please use the following convention to name the file of your article – LASTNAME_v#n#, where the # symbols refer to the volume and issue numbers. Do not use dots. You might want to add the version number or the date at the end.

Specifications

- Use 1.5 line spacing
- No right justification, no indent at beginning of paragraph.
- Please use continuous line numbers.

Levels

We use three levels of heading:

- **CAPITALIZED, BOLD, AND SIZE-14 FONT**
- ***First Word Capitalized, Italicized, and Size-12 Font***
- *Sentence case, italicized, and Size-11 font, in line with the paragraph.*

WRITING FOR *ELEMENTS*

You will be given a carefully defined space by your Guest Editors. This is your “canvas” and you should design your paper from the outset to fit this space, including illustrations. Do not expect to shorten your paper after review. We often find that authors wish to increase the length of their papers after review in order to address potential reviewer criticism, so a first version slightly shorter than the allotted space may be desirable

Word Count

One of the challenges of writing for *Elements* is to adhere to a strict word count. Only under exceptional circumstances will a manuscript exceed six published pages. This translates into 6,100 words equivalent (which includes all the text, headings, figure/table captions, references, and figures/tables). Estimate that each figure/table equals 250 words. Please consider using the Article Length Calculator Excel file that your Guest Editors will provide.

American or British Style?

We accept both styles of English. When an author uses a mix of both styles, we will choose American style.

References

You are limited to **30 references maximum**. You are not expected to reference every statement.

This is how you should refer to an article in your text (Brantley 2005). Please note that there is no comma between last name and year (Brantley and Rogers 2006; Brantley et al. 2007). If you list several references, do so in chronological order starting with the oldest one first. If the reference is part of the sentence, do it this way: Tremblay et al. (2007) prepared a master file to take the guesswork out of authors. Tremblay et al. (2005, 2007) suggest that you review the instructions to authors for examples. This is how you should refer to another article in your issue (Volkman 2022 this issue).

We use a reference style similar to that of *Contributions to Mineralogy and Petrology*. Journal names are written out, not abbreviated. Include a full doi with the reference.

Mineral Names

Make sure you use mineral names and formula approved by the International Mineralogical Association. Check <https://rruff.info/ima/>

Level of Writing

One article that hit the mark perfectly in terms of level of writing is Hochella and Madden (2005) and we encourage you to read it.

The Review Process

You have completed your first draft, reread it, and asked a colleague (or one of your students) to review it informally and you are within your budgeted word count: your article is now ready to be sent to the guest editor team which will have it reviewed by two (or more) external reviewers, but not until the Guest Editors have themselves read your manuscript to ensure it is ready to be sent out for external review. If not, they will return it to you for further work. If yes, they will send it out for external review.

After external review, your manuscript will be returned to you by the Guest Editor team with instructions for how to revise your manuscript according to the external reviewer reports, which you will also receive, and their own reviews of your article and you will revise your manuscript accordingly. You will reiterate this process until the Guest Editors are satisfied with your revised article. It will then be sent by the Guest Editors to the Principal Editor in charge of your issue, who will now read, edit, and otherwise annotate your manuscript and, when done, return it to the Guest Editors who will return it to you for a final, or several, rounds of further revision until the Principal Editor is satisfied. Send a Word version of your article with your figures pasted at the end of the article. You may also send a PDF version as well.

Figures

A maximum of one figure per page is a good target. We encourage you to read Dutrow (2007) regarding principles for good use of color and for easy reading of figures. Vector files are preferable (.ai, .eps), but .jpg, .tiff, and .pdf work well too. Provide an image that can be used as a background for the title of your article. We refer to it as a banner. Images should be 300 dpi and a minimum of 2200 × 750 pixels in size.

Copyright Issues

You are responsible for securing the permission to reprint a figure. It is not acceptable to reproduce a caption from an article already published, even if you were one of the authors of that paper. Please see the documentation above regarding permission to reproduce/modify images.

What's Your Fog Index?

The Fog Index measures the readability of a text. In a sample of writing, you count the number of words with more than three syllables and the number of words per sentence on average. The higher your fog index, the harder to read. Check your fog index at <https://readabilityformulas.com/free-readability-formula-tests.php>. To increase the readability of your text, break down long sentences and choose shorter words when possible.

Pruning Your Text

Watch out for padded words! Beware of sentences beginning by “It is well known that...” and “It is estimated that...” We suggest you do a global search for “ly” and “very”, and ask yourself: is this adverb necessary? You might be quite surprised at the number of words you can prune from your text.

Conclusions

Before you start writing, we strongly encourage you to read this entire manual. It will betime well invested, we promise.

REFERENCES

Elements uses a “light” style for its citations of published work—in particular, a minimal use of punctuation. In the interest of saving space, when a publication is written by six or more authors, the citation in the References section gives the name of only the first author, the remaining being referred to as “and xx coauthors.” For publications with five authors or less, all names are given in the citation. See below and also look at recent issues for Elements’ protocol on style and the hierarchy of listing. When available, the doi (document object identifier) hyperlink is also included. Note that for references only, the hyphen is used for page ranges (not the otherwise correct en dash). Please be sure to include the reference DOI as indicated in the following examples.

Articles

Sio CKI, Dauphas N (2017) Thermal and crystallization histories of magmatic bodies by Monte Carlo inversion of Mg-Fe isotopic profiles in olivine. *Geology* 45: 67-70, doi: [10.1130/G38056.1](https://doi.org/10.1130/G38056.1)

Sio CKI and 5 coauthors (2013) Discerning crystal growth from diffusion profiles in zoned olivine by in situ Mg-Fe isotopic analyses. *Geochimica et Cosmochimica Acta* 123: 302-321, doi: [10.1016/j.gca.2013.06.008](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gca.2013.06.008)

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Book

Harrison TM (2020) *Hadean Earth*. Springer International Publishing, 291 pp, doi: [10.1007/978-3-030-46687-9](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-46687-9)