

## Writing Process for Leviathan

### Steps

#### Step 1: Proposal Application

Send a proposal of no less than **250 words** and no more than **500 words** via the form. Make sure it includes the argument you plan on making, the evidence you plan on including for your argument, **why this topic is important** and how it connects to the theme.

#### Step 2: Research

Refresh yourself on the appropriate background for your piece. Feel free to approach your **regional editor** for any help you might need finding appropriate sources. It may be helpful to consult popular news wires, subject guides published by libraries and books. Even if you are already familiar with the details of the topic, any piece of information included in the article that could be considered beyond the scope of common knowledge requires a citation. For example, the identities of world leaders are considered common knowledge, but the dates they were elected, the scope of their powers and the specific policies they are associated with are not.

Once you have your basic background information established, look for **evidence to back up your argument**. Ideally, you will be able to cite peer-reviewed academic publications for all of your most important points. If you cite a study or a statistic, it is better to cite the institution that conducted the research rather than a secondary source reporting on it. **Understanding the context of the research** will help you deploy it with more efficacy in your argument. However, it is not appropriate to cite source materials written originally in another language and viewed through Google Translate. In this case, default to secondary reporting of the research in a language you understand. For you to use something as evidence, it is not necessary that the source materials you cite are using it to make the same argument as you – it is appropriate and even encouraged to re-interpret information used for a different purpose so long as you understand the context.

In fact, the final step of your research should be to look for **writers who may oppose your position**. To forward the best version of your argument, it is critical to research, anticipate and pre-emptively rebut the best counterarguments.

Before moving on and typing your thesis statement with conviction, remember that as the years go on, it is the quality of your research that will determine how your article fares. If you are making an argument worth making, somebody will probably disagree with you. The difference between divisive slander and argumentative discourse is that the latter includes clear, logical connections between established fact, available evidence and advocacy.

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## Step 3: Draft 1

Once your proposal has been accepted, you should feel free to **get in touch with your regional editor** to seek advice before beginning your draft. Share your evidence with them, ask them about the structure, show them an outline or ask them to meet up and help you draft one. However, if you feel ready to begin, keep the following things in mind.

One of the greatest challenges presented by *Leviathan's* unique aims and audience is to retain a focus on your argument while also providing the requisite background information. While on one hand, there is little point in publishing an unoriginal explanatory article on the details of a current event, you must always keep in mind that in writing to a diverse group of readers, you cannot assume detailed background of international affairs.

**Creating an outline will help you** to balance the need to prove your argument and the need to remain accessible to a wide audience. We recommend foregrounding your argument when writing your outline before considering how and where to incorporate the background details. Too many articles foreground a robust (and often interesting and educational) background on the topic but fail to persuasively connect their own thesis at the end.

Once you have an outline, try to **write it out in the clearest way possible**. Academic writing intimidates many people, and this intimidation gets in their head infecting them with the need to be overly verbose and convoluted. First and foremost, writing is about communication; focus on efficiently and directly trying to inform and persuade your reader of the argument you are making. Polishing it will come later.

## Step 4: Draft 2

Editing can be much more difficult and much more important than writing. Very few writers are going to get everything right the first time around. Think of **your second draft as an opportunity to turn all of your initial ideas into the best version of themselves**. This also means you can put less pressure on yourself when it comes to writing the first draft!

Writing your second draft will start with either oral or written **feedback from your regional editor**. If writing is an important part of your life, consider logging all of the feedback you receive from professors and editors alike in a document to reference before submitting future assignments. Never make the same mistake twice.

Work closely to implement all your editor's suggestions or ask follow-up questions if some are confusing or unappealing to you. Start with the broadest suggestions, those affecting structure or argument, and work to more specific ones concerning spelling or grammar. This is to avoid wasting time on grammatical mistakes that may become irrelevant depending on how you choose to structure your piece.

If the goal of the first draft was to get your ideas out clearly, the goal of the second draft is to **refine and strengthen your argument**. Ensure you are using your best evidence in the most persuasive way

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possible. Focus on the way that your different points fit together to ensure that your piece is a cohesive whole. You will know this draft is finished when you and your regional editor are happy with the structure and clarity of your arguments.

## Step 5: Final Draft

Working on your final draft will also begin with a new round of suggestions from your regional editor as you work as a team to fine-tune and perfect your piece.

By this time, your ideas and arguments should be clear, and the **structure of your piece should be sound**. Now it is time to focus on the writing. Academic writing need not be dense and confusing. Clarity should always come before rhetorical flourishes, no matter how appealing they may be.

What differentiates academic writing from regular writing is professionalism and clarity. Well-written academic writing omits vernacular or slang, making it as comprehensible in the distant future as it is today. **Use precise terms**. Leave no interpretation up to chance. Whereas in an email to your friend, it may be enough to hint at something, when writing for *Leviathan* you should assume that your article will be read by many people who come from backgrounds very different from your own. Replace your contractions with full words. Add context where appropriate.

Grammatical conventions will not only help your article to be more accessible by making it easier for those still learning English to use books to interpret your article, they also help to establish your authority. **Pay special attention to your citations**. Opponents of your article may incredulously peruse them to fact-check one of your claims. Researchers may reference them to find more information from one of the sources you use. A potential employer might check them once your article comes up in their Google search of your name, assessing your integrity or attention to detail. Refer to the Chicago Manual of Style liberally.

Finally, make sure that your article is **something you feel proud of**. That might mean taking the extra time to rework your first and last sentences until they strike the right chord, hammering your thesis home. It may mean adding a detail or two to ensure that your reader is drawn into the article the way that you were drawn to the topic. You are capable of fascinating, educating and persuading. Read your article once out loud to make sure you like how it sounds.

## Step 6: Peer Reviewing Edits (where applicable)

The peer review process is an important part of ***Leviathan's* credibility as an academic journal**. As talented as our regional editor are, none of them would presume to be experts on their respective region. They can help tremendously with your research, argumentation and writing, but they ultimately lack the qualifications to fully understand the way that your article interacts with the complex scholarship that surely exists on your topic of choice. That's where our peer reviewers come in.

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## General Requirements

### Topics

As Leviathan is a triannual publication, it would never be able to compete were its articles to aim to provide the most up-to-date political analysis. Instead, our niche is **in-depth analysis** of multitudinous issues united around one theme for our readers to ponder. We encourage our writers to submit diverse and unique takes on the theme, approaching it from **different angles** or viewing it in different lights. However, it is critical that your article does connect to the theme in some important way, rather than just touching on it or incorporating it after the fact.

### Writing tips

Each of the points describes the key problems with writing for Leviathan. Each of the following can be a tiny sub-chapter of the 'writing tips' chapter.

### Structure

**An outline is key to staying organized.** Staying organized is key to clarity. The reader should be able to quickly identify your argument once they begin to read your article. They should clearly understand how one paragraph leads into the next. Instead of trying to impose this order once you have all of your ideas down, begin by sorting your ideas into the order that makes the most sense and creating an outline. Work from that outline to create a clear progression of your ideas, each one building on your argument and making it stronger.

**Use topic sentences.** Include clear transitions between one point and the next. If this feels bulky and difficult, the issue may be that your argument is too convoluted. **Closing sentences are your friend.** They leave a stronger impression of your argument on your reader. Arguments without structure are better suited to 2AM treks across the Meadows than academic articles. Talk your ideas through with someone until they fit neatly together and cohere. Even the most brilliant ideas, without structure, are nothing more than a hot mess.

### Argument

Where many articles fail is in the construction of the argument. Overly relying on background information and colourful details, they fail to connect their evidence to their thesis. An argument is no more than **the relationship between a claim and a warrant**, and too many articles fail to make this relationship explicitly clear. Claiming that the Hive should be shut down with the warrant that I contracted a rare and deadly virus would mean nothing without the critically important fact that I contracted the rare and deadly virus on Trash Tuesday. While many local publications may stop there, at *Leviathan*, we seek diversity, meaning that we cannot assume that our readership is familiar with

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Edinburgh's nightclub scene and thus the argument would only be complete once I explained that the local nightclub, *Hive* should be shut down because I contracted a rare and deadly virus during a regularly scheduled promotional event on their premises called Trash Tuesday.

## Style

*Leviathan* is an academic journal, but that does not mean that your writing needs to sound like a professorial debate. Avoid sounding stilted by focusing on your message first and the language second. **Make clarity your first priority.** Impose some structure with a clear introduction, conclusion and topic sentences. Make sure to include a summary of the existing scholarship on the topic in addition to the basic facts your readers will need for background. Afterwards, polish the language by removing any contractions, slang or vernacular. Add transition words such as "therefore," "thus," "furthermore," and "additionally." Double check your grammar and spelling. Triple check your citations - language comes second to research when it comes to determining whether your writing is up to snuff academically.

## Language

*Leviathan* is an international publication, and as such, **language is more of a matter of accessibility than propriety.** Ensure that each word you use can be found in a dictionary. If you must use one that cannot be, either because it is central to existing academic discussions of your topic or because you are quoting someone else or otherwise discussing linguistic matters, be sure to include a definition with a citation. Explaining what the word means is not enough, you need to prove that you did not invent it by keeping your references in order.

Before quoting someone, ask yourself what the quote adds to your story to ensure that the same message could not be more efficiently conveyed by paraphrasing it. If you feel the need to write a long description to immerse your writer in a scene, try to limit yourself to only the most important details. Writing thrives on word economy, and for argumentative political articles, **conveying the message is always more important than writing beautifully.** That is not to say that you should not use big words or aspire to writing greatness. Rather, use big words to have a more precise meaning rather than using them to get the right rhythm.

## References

As of the fall of 2019, *Leviathan* uses **Chicago-style referencing.** Specifically, we use notes and bibliography style (as opposed to author-date). Check the Chicago Manual of Style for full information on how to reference. Do not forget to continue using day/month/year for dates though! Chicago is in the United States, but we are not.