

# What does the source actually establish?

Use a source ID and a reason for every answer. Compare with the separate instructor guide after trying the case.

## FICTIONAL CASE

### A systematic review without a meta-analysis

A team plans to submit a systematic review to PLOS ONE. They report explicit search and screening methods but did not pool results statistically. Their draft has a study-selection flow diagram, no completed PRISMA checklist, and no statement about whether a protocol exists. A colleague says that the journal excludes all reviews and that the team must select Review in the submission system.

**Your task.** Use sources A and B to correct the colleague, identify the missing submission items, and state what these pages cannot establish. Record a section location for each answer.

**Open A and B:** [Source A: Criteria for Publication](#) / [Source B: Submission Guidelines](#). In A, find Criterion 1's systematic-review exception. In B, find Systematic reviews and meta-analyses. Sources checked 11 September 2026.

#### 1. Does the absence of a meta-analysis rule out this article type?

Answer / source ID / reason

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#### 2. Which article category does the journal tell this team to select?

Answer / source ID / reason

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#### 3. What reporting materials are missing or need a placement check?

Answer / source ID / reason

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#### 4. Can the team leave protocol status unstated?

Answer / source ID / reason

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The scenario is fictional. You are interpreting instructions, not certifying this manuscript or predicting acceptance.

# Trace one decision for another journal.

Use the Source Map to locate candidate pages. Verify the live instructions yourself. Keep private manuscript details out of shared copies.

## 1. Decision and journal

Choose one article-type, reporting or submission-package question.

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## 2. Source trail

Owner, page title, exact URL, section and date checked. Add a second source only when it resolves a different part.

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## 3. Evidence and interpretation

Paraphrase the relevant instruction, then explain its effect on your decision.

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## 4. Action and unresolved point

Who checks what next? Record inaccessible or conflicting instructions instead of guessing.

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## Before you share it

- **Authority.** Can another person open the exact official page and find the section?
- **Scope.** Does the conclusion preserve the source's exception, condition or missing detail?
- **Reasoning.** Are the source statement and the researcher's proposed action separate?
- **Uncertainty.** Is every unresolved item named with a specific next check?

If guidance is inaccessible or inconsistent, preserve that limit and identify the next check. An unresolved issue is more useful than a fabricated answer.

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[Answer key and current teaching edition](https://manusights.com/research/journal-source-map/teaching-kit)

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