

Compare the rule, not just the number.

A source-backed planning record that keeps article type, rule strength, counting exclusions, submission stage, and source location attached.

3

selected journals

10

article-specific observations

4

requirement families

Core boundary. Publisher instructions control. This purposive reference set is not a complete submission checklist, journal ranking, fit score, or guarantee that a requirement has not changed.

Use before formatting

Name the journal, exact article type, and submission stage.
Then record what each count includes and excludes.

Use in author support

Separate a limit from a recommendation, layout example, procedure, or explicit absence of a restriction.

Version 2026.09.11-requirements1 | Sources reviewed 2026-09-11 | CC BY 4.0 for the Manusights compilation | No login required

Five checks before a requirement becomes actionable.

01

Match the article type

A journal can publish several article types with different limits. Record the exact category before copying any number.

02

Name the rule strength

Keep limits, recommendations, ranges, layout guidance, procedures, and explicit absence of a restriction distinct.

03

Rebuild the count

Write down what the publisher excludes. Abstracts, Methods, references, legends, tables, and supplements do not travel together across journals.

04

Match the submission stage

Initial submission, revision, and publication formatting can use different rules or allow format-free submission.

05

Record the evidence

Save the source URL, section, observation date, unresolved fields, and the date the author will recheck the live instructions.

Stopping rule. If the article type, rule strength, counting boundary, source, or stage cannot be established, mark the requirement unresolved. Do not convert a missing value into permission.

Example: 3,900 words at The BMJ

The Research record sets no fixed word limit, but its reported main-text count excludes the abstract, references, tables, boxes and figures, not Methods. A manuscript with 800 Methods words reports 3,900.

Example: 3,900 words at PLOS ONE

The Research Article record states no word-count restriction, so nothing is counted against a cap. Its abstract still has a separate 300-word limit.

Three article types, with their conditions attached.

Values are concise transcriptions of the reviewed evidence record. Open the canonical page for full source locators and exports. An explicitly unrestricted field is not a universal exemption; other preparation and file requirements still apply.

PLOS ONE RESEARCH ARTICLE MAIN TEXT / EXPLICITLY UNRESTRICTED No word-count restriction Concise presentation is encouraged; abstract has a separate limit. ABSTRACT / LIMIT At most 300 words No citations; follow any study-specific requirements. DISPLAYS / EXPLICITLY UNRESTRICTED No restriction on number of figures The cited statement names figures, not an independent table allowance. REFERENCES OR SUPPLEMENT / EXPLICITLY UNRESTRICTED No restriction on amount of supporting information File preparation instructions still apply.	PLOS Medicine RESEARCH ARTICLE MAIN TEXT / EXPLICITLY UNRESTRICTED No word-count restriction The journal encourages concise reporting. ABSTRACT / CONDITIONAL LIMIT 300 words preferred; maximum 500 Structured: Background; Methods and Findings; Conclusions. DISPLAYS / EXPLICITLY UNRESTRICTED No restriction on number of figures The source does not separately state a table cap here. REFERENCES OR SUPPLEMENT / EXPLICITLY UNRESTRICTED No restriction on amount of supporting information Other submission and file requirements still apply.
The BMJ RESEARCH MAIN TEXT / EXPLICITLY UNRESTRICTED No fixed word-count limit Reported main-text count excludes abstract, references, tables, boxes and figures. Methods are not excluded by this definition. ABSTRACT / CONDITIONAL GUIDANCE 250 to 300 words; up to 400 for CONSORT or PRISMA abstracts Structured; use the study-appropriate headings. DISPLAYS Not verified in this edition. REFERENCES OR SUPPLEMENT Not verified in this edition.	

Document the decision and the remaining uncertainty.

JOURNAL, ARTICLE TYPE, AND SUBMISSION STAGE

REQUIREMENT, RULE STRENGTH, AND PUBLISHER WORDING

WHAT IS COUNTED AND EXCLUDED

SOURCE URL, SECTION, OBSERVATION DATE, AND RECHECK DATE

COVERAGE GAPS, UNRESOLVED QUESTIONS, AND DECISION OWNER

Official sources in this edition

PLOS ONE - PLOS ONE submission guidelines
<https://journals.plos.org/plosone/s/submission-guidelines>
Observed 2026-09-11.

The BMJ - The BMJ: Article types and preparation
<https://www.bmj.com/about-bmj/resources-authors/article-types>
Observed 2026-09-11.

PLOS Medicine - PLOS Medicine submission guidelines
<https://journals.plos.org/plosmedicine/s/submission-guidelines>
Observed 2026-09-11.

Canonical record: <https://manusights.com/resources/journal-submission-specs>. Original Manusights compilation and blank worksheet: CC BY 4.0.
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