

IAABC Journal Style Guide

This guide is for authors and prospective authors of material for the IAABC journal. All the material that goes into the journal will adhere to this style guide. We've created it to help make the submissions and editing process more transparent, and give you some guidance about what we're looking for.

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Journal mission statement

We hope that this journal will benefit animal behavior professionals by becoming a forum where we can share insight and experience that helps us move towards best practice in our field.

About content

Animal behavior is a large and diverse field, so we are open to content from many areas, such as

- Training
- Welfare
- Enrichment
- Applied behavioral analysis
- Ethology
- The human-animal bond
- Interpersonal skills
- Scientific literacy

We are looking for content covering all species of animal in any situation; this includes

- Companion animals
- Working and service animals
- Sheltered animals and animals in foster care or long-term sanctuaries
- Feral and semi-feral animals, e.g. village dogs, farm cats
- Wild animals in captivity or not
- Laboratory animals

All contributions to IAABC continuing education, including submissions to our journal, must be based on current, scientifically valid principles and reflect our [Core Competencies](#) and [position on LIMA](#).

Target audience

Assume that you are writing for a keen amateur animal trainer – someone with a basic knowledge of the principles of learning theory, an understanding of the species you are writing about, and a commitment to the LIMA framework.

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Keep explanations of basic concepts like what the quadrants are, and what the ABC model is to a maximum of a couple of sentences where appropriate. Consider using a hyperlink to point readers to an authoritative dictionary of psychological terms, such as the American Psychological Association's free online [Dictionary of Terms](#). As we are an international organization, bear in mind that English may not be the first language of every reader—try to limit technical terms and jargon where possible.

Focus on behavior

Wherever possible, focus on describing the behavior of the animals you are discussing instead of their emotional state. For example:

Instead of: "The dog was shut down."

You could say: "The dog walked slowly with a tucked tail and dropped head, not making eye contact or responding to any environmental stimuli."

Instead of: "The parrot became jealous."

You could say: "The parrot moved his body in between myself and Monica and screamed."

This is especially important when describing dominance, submission and power dynamics. Don't say "the puppy submitted" or "the female is usually the dominant one" without a detailed, operationalized description of what lead you to draw that conclusion.

Complementary and alternative medicine

Currently, no meta-analysis or systematic review supports the use of any complementary therapy in behavior modification for companion animals. IAABC cannot, therefore, accept content promoting these products and techniques as an adjunct or alternative to behavior modification.

Although we recognize that personal beliefs and opinions on the efficacy of different types of alternative medicine may run contrary to this position, we can only accept the best evidence presented by the scientific community at this time. IAABC's position will change if the body of evidence changes.

Word count

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Our limits on word count are flexible. We welcome shorter pieces as well as more detailed work. Long articles can be split across multiple issues. Here are some general guidelines based on existing content:

Articles

These can include: descriptions of cases, programs, or classes; enquiries into the nature or significance of concepts in behavior consulting; “state of the art” reviews of a technique or protocol; essays on science and ethics. They typically run between about **1200 and 2800 words**. Articles can include diagrams, photos and videos where appropriate.

Video guides

Demonstrations of a particular technique, explanations of a particular setup for enrichment or training that consist of one or more videos with some description. These tend to run between around **500 and 2000 words**.

Case studies

A complete description of everything that goes into a case study is in the section below. They tend to run longer, around **2000-3500 words**.

Interviews

Previous interview write-ups have run between **1500-2500 words**; this includes quotes and supplementary materials from the interviewer.

Case studies

If you’re submitting a case study, there are some particular elements we’d like you to include as part of the write-up. You’ll need to include:

- Background details about the animal—their species, breed, and age.
- Details of the animal’s living situation where relevant—whether there are other animals or people in the house, and their ages. If a client has requested they remain anonymous, please provide a pseudonym and make sure to omit details that would make it easy for others to recognize the people involved.
- Behavioral history for the animal—what was going on before you were involved? Do you know anything of the animal’s early life?
- Details of the event(s) that caused you to get involved with the case.
- Any relevant medical history. A list of any medications, special diets, nutraceuticals or supplements the animal is on, as well as who prescribed/suggested them and when.
- Your assessment of the behavior problems and your plan to address them.

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- What happened in each session—what your goals were and what happened; whether you needed to change your plans.
- Any data you keep, either raw or in graphical form, that we can use to illustrate the progress the animal and client have made.
- If there has been a conclusion, how was it reached?

The general guideline for video and data is, more is better. Our Dropbox for authors has plenty of space! We can help you edit down to the right kind of video length, and generate graphs and charts from data if needed.

If your case study is ongoing, we'd love to follow it over the course of several issues, so please plan to take video of more than one session.

Anyone working professionally in behavior cases is welcome to submit a case study.

Referencing published works

Include full references to all the published papers you draw from in your articles, and the full link to all websites you mention. If you use direct quotes from personal correspondences—emails, phone calls or face-to-face—please say when and how you corresponded with the source.

Sample reference format:

In text:

Dogs that are stressed can often exhibit elevated levels of various hormones.¹

At the end of the article:

1. Nagasawa, M. et al (2014) The behavioral and endocrinological development of stress response in dogs. *Developmental Psychology* 56:4, pp.726-733.

Include a link to the material if you have one; we recommend the [WorldCat](#) website for finding books, and [CrossRef](#) for finding journal articles.

As a general rule, give as much detail as you can about where you got your information, even if it seems excessive. We may not include these details in the final published piece, but we need them for the fact-checking part of the editing process.

Linking to other content

If you want to include links to online content outside the journal, for example to a blog or a dictionary, make sure include the full text of the link. Bear in mind that not all sources are created equal and we may ask you to find a more authoritative source as part of the editing process.

Plagiarism

We have a zero-tolerance approach to [plagiarism](#), which is defined as the copying of an existing work without attribution to the original author. If you quote something that has been published elsewhere, make it clear where the quote starts and ends, whom you are quoting, and where you found it.

We encourage all authors to submit **original and unique** works to our journal because our readers expect it. If you want to submit an article that appears in whole or in part elsewhere—even as a personal blog post—please make sure that you own the copyright, and that you make it clear to us where and when the original article was published. This includes pictures and videos. We cannot accept articles that have already been published in large journals in print or online, or that are in a current issue of a print or online magazine. If you don't declare that parts, or the entirety, of your work exists elsewhere and we find out, we will not print the article.

Biographies

All authors who contribute to the journal will be asked to write a short biography to be included with their articles. The biography must be no longer than three sentences maximum, or 300 characters—whichever is shortest—and may include a link to a personal or business website or email address.

Language guidelines

Our journal generally follows the Associated Press style guide. We do have some differences, which are listed below.

Abbreviations

As English is not the first language of some of our members, please spell out all the acronyms and abbreviations you use the first time you use them in your article. The only exception to this is qualifications—the letters after people's names, like CDBC, PhD, or CCPDT-KA.

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Capitalization

The titles of articles should be in title case. We can help you think of a title if you're struggling!

Headings should be in sentence case.

Cues

Cues not commands or requests. Be specific if necessary; *verbal cues; visual cues; tactile cues.*

Keep the names of cues lowercase—you don't need to capitalize the names of cued behaviors, like "I asked the dog to perform a Sit". If a behavior is being called something that's not obvious, use double quotes:

I asked the dog to perform a "station"

Explain what the quoted word means the first time it is used.

I asked the dog to perform a "station" (lying on a mat)

Spelling and punctuation

Follow AP style, except for the use of serial commas. Serial commas should be used where appropriate, as in, "*To My Parents, Ayn Rand, and God*"

You can use British, Canadian or American English spellings, but be consistent throughout your submission.

Inclusive language

The IAABC is a diverse organization, and we want our journal to reflect this. To that end, we encourage authors to avoid gendered phrasing, like "Every dog has his day," or phrasing with an accidental racist, ableist, or heteronormative bias.

Use of the third-person plural pronoun *they* is more appropriate than *s/he* or *him or her*. Don't automatically use *he* when referring to an animal. Either use *they* or mix up your examples, sometimes using *he* and sometimes *she*. We prefer *they*.

Do not use mental health terminology unless you're discussing an actual mental health diagnosis. For example, *OCD* is not appropriate shorthand for "enjoys being organized", and *psychotic* should never be used in place of "irrational." This includes diagnosed personality disorders such as narcissism and sociopathy.

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Names of breeds

Use *pitbull type mix* if you're identifying a dog that resembles an American pit bull terrier, (or *Staffie mix* if you're writing about a location where pit bull mixes are banned). If you're referring to the registered breeds, use *American pit bull terrier*, *Staffordshire bull terrier*, etc.

Dog breed names should be lowercase unless derived from a proper noun, e.g., *Labrador retriever*; *German shorthaired pointer*; *Samoyed*; *Rottweiler*; *Jack Russell terrier*; *Siamese cat*. Follow [Merriam-Webster](#) if in doubt.

Do not use nicknames for breeds, such as *doxie*, *BSH*, *doodle* or *pibble*. If you are making multiple references to a breed with several names, like *Doberman pinscher*, you can shorten to one word after the first usage.

Animals and people

Dogs are a *who* if they are being talked about specifically, as in, "I had a dog who would not quit." If they're being talked about generally, they're a *that* as in, "feral cats that aren't friendly." As a rule, if you could substitute "Rover" in the sentence, use *who*. If not, use *that*.

Avoid using *pet parents*, *furkids*, or similar terms. *Pet owner* or *pet guardian* is preferable. Use *caregiver* only if you're talking about animals in a shelter or otherwise homeless.

Males and *females* should only be used when talking about animals; humans are *people*.

As a general rule, use gender-neutral language at all times (like *people* instead of *men and women*; *they* instead of *he or she*) unless a specific gender is a relevant piece of information for your topic (like *the dog displayed aggression only towards older men*).

Typesetting and file formats

It's not important how you typeset your article—use any size font, of any type you choose. We won't be able to keep any of the formatting.

Try to avoid using footnotes to explain material; if possible, add the explanation into the main text. See Referencing Published Works in this guide for how to add references to your article.

Send your submissions in the following formats:

Writing: Microsoft Word (.docx); LibreOffice (.odt); LaTeX (.tex); Rich Text (.rtf); Apple Pages (.pages). Not PDF as we can't easily edit it.

Pictures: PDF; PNG; JPG; PSD.

Videos: M4V; MP4. Try to avoid .MOV.

You can send them by email or uploading them to the cloud (for example, Google Drive, Dropbox, or OneDrive). We have a Dropbox for sharing files that are too large for email attachment limits—ask our Managing Editor to be added if you think you'll need it.

Media (pictures and video)

We specifically welcome submissions that include video, and will give preference to case studies with video. We need the *original video file* to embed in the journal; don't send us links to YouTube or other streaming sites. We have a dedicated Dropbox for authors to share videos with us, or you can use another service like Hightail or Google Drive. If somebody other than you owns the copyright to your pictures or video, include this information with your submission.

If you include photographs with your submission (please do!), higher resolution is better—300dpi is best, and lower resolutions will only be run after our Layout and Design editor has approved them. Minor editing in Photoshop, for example to remove red eye, is okay, but we discourage significant image manipulation. All photos and illustrations should either be under a [Creative Commons](#) license, or you should either own the copyright or have permission from the source.

Equipment

Whenever possible, shoot your video on a tripod. The video will look a lot better when held steady. There are tripods available for both [camcorders](#) and [smartphones](#). If you don't have a tripod, another option is to rest the equipment on something flat, level and stable. You want to make sure that the scene you want to film will be in the frame before shooting.

Microphones built into camcorders only work within a few feet of the camera. If possible, use an external microphone, such as a [lapel mic](#) or a Bluetooth earpiece. For smartphones, try to have the phone as close to what you're filming as possible. There are even microphone options for [smartphones](#).

If there are other people in the video, it's a good idea to have them fill out a [simple waiver](#) for their permission to use the video on public platforms, such as YouTube or for the IAABC Journal site. We have a Media Release form available on request.

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Lighting

Good lighting will make a big difference in the quality of your video. Shooting outside will give you the best results. If filming outside, shooting on overcast days can provide better lighting than full sun days. Don't shoot with the camera facing toward the sun. If you're shooting inside, try to turn on as many lights as possible, and bring the lights close to your video subject. You do not want your subject backlit.

Sound

Always be conscious of the background noise, and try to control it as much as possible. If filming outside, try to film in a quiet place, on a calm day. If you're filming inside, turn off fans or other appliances that make humming sounds, and close windows to block outside noises. If someone is filming for you, be sure that they don't talk or make other sounds like loud breathing or coughing.

Do a test run of your video first to make sure there is no overwhelming background noise, such as wind. You may not realize how loud it will sound on the video until you listen to it, so it's best to review the sound prior to starting filming.

Filming

Before hitting the record button, compose the shot. Are you cutting off someone's head? Also, check the background for any distracting or unsightly objects. Shoot close in—fill the LCD monitor of your camcorder, or screen of your smartphone, with the main subject being shot. In general, do not pan at all, either back and forth, or up and down.

Writing a script can be very helpful as you can be sure to say everything you meant to say; relying on improvising can mean you have to do several takes as you remember more things you should have included.

When shooting video footage, try to hold every shot for at least five seconds; this will give you buffer footage that makes editing easier. It is best to film more than you think you need—we can always edit it before it goes into the journal, and sometimes you get footage that's better than you planned!

Notes for phone users:

- If you are using a smartphone to film, make sure you hold the phone in a LANDSCAPE orientation and not portrait.
- Keep it steady! Use a tripod if you have one. Setting the phone up on a flat surface is also good. If you have to hold the phone, make sure you hold it with both hands.



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- Make sure your shot is in focus. Most smartphone cameras have a “tap to focus” option.
- If you are going to zoom, make sure you start filming *after* you zoom. Otherwise the final video will be pixelated and low quality.
- Put your phone on airplane mode before filming! It will give you a longer battery life and not disturb your filming.
- If you will be filming for a while, have some type of battery backup with you.

Consent and copyright

If you use pictures or video of your clients or client animals in any capacity in your content, please ensure that you have explicit consent from them to do so. In most cases verbal consent is sufficient but we do have a media release form if you need one.

If you use images downloaded from the Internet, make sure you either have the rights to the image yourself, or you are using images that are free to use for commercial purposes. Google Image Search can filter images by license, or you can search a public domain photo site like Pixabay.com or Unsplash.com.

Feedback

We’re always open to questions and comments, and we hope that you will be too. Our website has a comments section that will be open to the public, and if we receive any emails regarding your submission, we’ll forward them to you. We’ll also be working hard to spread the word about the journal on social media, and we’d love your help in sharing our content!

Comments and questions

The IAABC Editing Team is:

Jesse Miller – Managing Editor – journal@iaabc.org

Adrienne Hovey – Copy Editor

Adria Karlsson — Content Editor: Behavior

Valerie Pollard — Content Editor: Equine

Mychelle Blake – Project Manager and Layout

We will try our best to answer any questions you have about the submissions and editing process, and help you turn your ideas into published content.

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Miscellaneous word use and spellings

Never use *alpha*, even when talking about a pack structure

Group is preferable to *pack* for dogs in a home or shelter

Playgroup not *play-group* or *play group*

Rehome not *re-home*

Animal shelter not *SPCA* or *humane society*, unless you're naming an institution

Sheltered [species] is preferable to *shelter [species]*. E.g., *sheltered dogs I have trained*