

Writing tips for *Teaching Geography* and *Primary Geographer*

Would you like to share your experience of teaching national curriculum geography with others? If so why not write an article about it for *Teaching Geography* or *Primary Geographer*? Articles from geography teachers are always welcome, yet are often in short supply!

Do not be deterred if you have not written an article before. You could start with a short item on your approach to teaching, for example, some aspect of physical, human or environmental geography. This could be a single lesson, a sequence of lessons, a unit of study, a scheme of work or an activity or method which has proved successful.

Some hints on writing an article and getting it accepted for publication are listed below. They are presented in the form of a checklist and written in a direct style for the sake of brevity.

Some suggestions

1. Read articles. The best way to begin is by studying a selection of articles which have appeared in recent issues. You will find considerable variety because there is no single correct way to write an article, and style is in any case a personal matter. Study the content, treatment, length, illustrations and general presentation of different kinds of article.
2. Write clearly. Readability is essential. Clarity and directness are always looked for in an article. Avoid flowery phrases and long sentences. If any sentence runs to more than 25 words, try to break it up into two shorter, more easily readable sentences. Similarly use shorter paragraphs rather than longer ones.
3. Be factual. You will find it easiest to write a straightforward, factual article based on your personal experience of teaching. Say what happened in an objective manner. If necessary provide brief background information about your school or scheme of work, and state the year group to which your article relates. Add evaluative comments if you wish, including any of a light-hearted nature!
4. Be topical. Write about something that you have taught during the past year. The national curriculum is uppermost in teachers' minds, so showing how the subject of your article can help to deliver part of the geography curriculum is bound to appeal to readers.
5. Be practical. Concentrate on the practicalities of teaching. Show readers how they could use or adapt your ideas if they wish to do so. You might include a checklist of things to be done when your approach is used in the classroom.
6. Give answers. Only pose questions if you intend to answer them! Readers expect authors to provide answers based on their experience of teaching the topic.
7. Get attention. The introduction is important. If you don't interest the reader in the first 100 words, you are unlikely to do so later. The title should be short and crisp, and the opening paragraph should give a clear indication of content.
8. Show structure. Your article should have a structure which is immediately apparent to the reader. This can be done by using sub-headings, or by numbering sections, or by indicating the structure in the introduction.
9. Length. For *Primary Geographer*, articles should be no longer than 1500 words. The different sections of *Teaching Geography* include articles which vary in length. As a guide a 'Geography Curriculum' or a 'Research File' article can be up to a maximum of about 3500 words. An article for 'Teaching File' should normally be 1000-2500 words in length. Articles for the 'Forum' section should be no longer than 1500 words. If your article becomes too long, look for ways of shortening it.
10. Step back! By this time you will be fully immersed in your article. Try to step back from it, however, and look at it from the point of view of the reader who will come to it 'cold'. Does it form a concise, coherent, readable article? Try it on a colleague.

Teaching Geography and *Primary Geographer* offer a valuable opportunity for you to communicate your ideas and share your experiences with other teachers. In addition you will have the satisfaction of seeing your work in print! So please try your hand at writing an article.