

Journal of Sedimentary Research

THE EDITORIAL DECISION

The decision to publish or not publish a manuscript involves many steps, and many aspects of a manuscript must be considered. Key factors are the effort the authors put into organizing and arguing their data and conclusions, and the recommendations of the Associate Editors and peer reviewers.

The Author's Role

On the author's end, most of us think we know what it takes to write a good paper, but it is surprising how many manuscripts are submitted with one or more basic flaws [see the February 2001 issue of *Sedimentology* (v. 48, no. 1) for an editorial that outlined the most common problems encountered, as well as suggestions for avoiding those problems]. JSR's list is essentially the same, and the key recommendations we make to authors are summarized below.

- In the introduction, develop a clear explanation of the importance of the study so that its relevance to broader research questions is apparent to all readers. Revisit the importance in the discussion and summarize it in the conclusions and abstract. If the broad importance of the work cannot be adequately stated, then the manuscript is probably better suited for a regional journal.
- Keep results (the data) separate from interpretation.
- Clearly explain the reasoning behind interpretations; that is, describe how the data support the interpretation.
- Consider alternative hypothesis and explain why they are rejected.
- Keep the manuscript focused on the main topic; eliminate data or ideas that are not germane to the topic.
- Provide high-quality photographs and diagrams, and size them as you expect them to appear in the published article. Photocopies of photographs are generally inadequate for the review process and are legitimate reasons for reviewers to recommend against a paper.