ORF Publication Guidelines

The Observer Research Foundation (ORF) publishes in various formats, under the direct supervision of both the Publications Committee and the editorial team. This document gives an overview of these publication formats, and the protocols that ORF strictly adheres to throughout the entire process of receiving drafts from authors, sending them for reviews, and editing and producing them for publication.

ORF reserves the right to accept or otherwise reject a submission. If your draft is accepted, this document should guide you in working with the ORF team in seeing your paper through to publication.

As we receive large numbers of submissions throughout the year, we request you to wait for our team to respond to your communication.

ORF Publication Formats

1. Short-forms

Expert Speak

An Expert Speak is a short, structured analysis of current events or trends in the researcher’s area of expertise directed at a wider reading audience. It should be comprehensible to the general reader.

Endnotes or footnotes are not used, and instead hyperlinks are provided for citations.

Indicative length: 800 - 1,500 words.

Review process: Drafts are reviewed by a panel of experts, which can include ORF faculty. The reviewers’ comments will be shared with the author for any required revisions.

The final draft will be cleared for publication by the web editor after it has been copy-edited and checked for plagiarism.
Commentary

A structured opinion/interpretation of current events or trends in the researcher’s domain directed towards a wider reading audience. It should be comprehensible to the general reader. As a rule, endnotes or footnotes should be avoided. These would normally be articles of ORF faculty members being reproduced from print or online media.

*Indicative length:* 900 – 1,200 words

*Review process:* Drafts are reviewed internally by ORF faculty/web editor. The reviewers’ comments will be shared with the author for any required revisions.

The final draft will be cleared for publication by the web editor after it has been copy-edited and checked for plagiarism.

A commentary that has been published outside of ORF will not be published by ORF without the appropriate, specific partnership with the original publisher.

If the draft has been rejected by ORF, it cannot be published outside of ORF bearing the ORF name.

Event Reports

Event Reports include roundups and minutes of key debates and discussions that take place in various ORF events and platforms.

*Indicative length:* 900 – 1,200 words

*Review process:* Draft reports will be reviewed by the web editor before being cleared for publication.

2. Long-forms

Issue Briefs

An Issue Brief should provide a succinct analytical account of a public policy issue that is of national or global relevance. It should be comprehensible to both the informed and general reader.

Endnotes should be provided. Authors are strongly encouraged to provide tables, graphs, and other graphics that should render the brief more comprehensive.

*Indicative length:* 3,000 - 5,000 words, inclusive of endnotes

*Review process:* Drafts are reviewed by at least one ORF expert, and one or more
external referees. The reviewers’ comments are shared with the author for any required revisions.

The draft is copy-edited, and the author is apprised of any editorial changes that the editor deems fit. The final draft will be cleared for publication by the ORF editor after it has been copy-edited and checked for plagiarism.

**Special Reports**

A Special Report is like an Issue Brief, in that it provides a succinct analysis of an issue of national or global relevance. What sets Special Reports apart is that they can take on a more journalistic tone.

Endnotes should be provided.

**Indicative length:** 3,000 - 5,000 words, inclusive of endnotes

**Review process:** Drafts are reviewed by at least one ORF expert, and one or more external referees. The reviewers’ comments are shared with the author for any required revisions.

The draft is copy-edited, and the author is apprised of any editorial changes that the editor deems fit. The final draft will be cleared for publication by the ORF editor after it has been copy-edited and checked for plagiarism.

**Occasional Papers**

An Occasional Paper is similar to an extended journal article. It should be of high academic quality and may be based on secondary or primary research.

Endnotes should be provided. Authors are strongly encouraged to provide tables, graphs, and other graphics that should render the brief more comprehensive.

**Indicative length:** 5,000 - 10,000 words, including endnotes

**Review process:** Drafts are reviewed by at least one ORF expert, and one or more external referees. The reviewers’ comments are shared with the author for any required revisions.

The draft is copy-edited, and the author is apprised of any editorial changes that the editor deems fit. The final draft will be cleared for publication by the ORF editor after it has been copy-edited and checked for plagiarism.

**Monographs**

Monographs are research reports that result from rigorous and original academic research,
dealing with a highly focused research question. The manuscript will be appropriately chaptered and footnoted, and can include an index and appendices. There should be adequate tables, graphs, and other graphics.

**Indicative length:** 25,000 to 50,000 words, including endnotes

**Review process:** Monographs will be reviewed internally by at least one ORF associate and two external referees. The monograph will also be reviewed for format by the ORF editor.

The draft is copy-edited, and the author is apprised of any editorial changes that the editor deems fit. The final draft will be cleared for publication by the ORF editor after it has been copy-edited and checked for plagiarism.

**Books**

Books are research reports that result from rigorous and original academic research. The manuscript will be appropriately chaptered, footnoted and will have an index.

All ORF books must be of a quality that can be published by outside publishers on a commercial basis without any buy-back commitments from ORF. Depending on the subject and nature of content, ORF may decide to publish some books in-house. These publications will be largely confined to cases where such a publication forms part of a project for which ORF has received funding and such publication has been provided for in the project budget.

**Indicative length:** 50,000 words and above, including endnotes

**Review process:** Books produced at ORF will be reviewed internally by at least one ORF associate and by the ORF editor, who may decide to refer the manuscript for further review.

**ORF Policy Briefs**

An ORF Policy Brief will be a short, crisp research output that succinctly outlines the rationale for adopting a particular policy alternative. It should succinctly (i) pose the problem; (ii) summarise the facts; (iii) spell out the policy options and their implications; and (iv) offer a specific recommendation.

Wherever necessary, a Policy Brief should be supported by an accompanying Issue Brief providing a more detailed statement on the background of the problem.

**Indicative length:** 3,000 words

**Review process:** To ensure exacting standards of quality and relevance, each paper would be reviewed by the Publications Committee and shown to the management.
ORF Style Guide

Use British English and not American English
- *s* instead of *z*: emphasise, analyse
- *our* instead of *or*: labour, neighbour
- *adviser* instead of *advisor*
- **Exception**: focused and focuses instead of focussed and focusses
- **Exception**: quotations or extracts (maintain original spellings)

ACRONYMS/ABBREVIATIONS:
- No periods, all caps: UN, NATO, WTO, COMESA, ASEAN
- Spell out for the first time and use acronym thereafter**Do not** add acronym in parentheses if the name only appears once
- No apostrophe before ‘s’ in the plural form (NPPs, UAVs)
- Use article before acronym depending on how it sounds (a NATO mission, an MOX plant)
- When the acronym can be read out like a word, do not use the article ‘the’ before it (WHO, BRICS); use ‘a’ and ‘an’ appropriately if it is used as an adjective (a WHO programme)

CAPITALISATION
- Use only when necessary
- Not to be used in the general sense:
  - The Indian government/the government vs. Government of India
  - The defence ministry vs. Ministry of Defence
  - The army vs. the Indian Army
  - The State of Lebanon vs. the Lebanese state
  - Before Partition (the event) vs. the partition of India (the verb)
- Capitalise a region (the global South, Far East Russia, India’s Northeast, the West) **but not** when describing a direction (western Tibet, southern France)
- Designations are capitalised when used as a prefix to the name (Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee), but in lower case otherwise (the Indian prime minister). Similarly, for ministries and organisations, capitals are used when the full title is used, as in Ministry of Defence, but not when it is defence ministry
- Capitalise: specific terms like the Indian Army, Indian Air Force or Indian Navy. **Do not capitalise** words army, navy etc. – they are in lower case when standing alone or not part of an official title
- Capitalise: the Second World War, First World War
- In regular title capitalisation (headline style), the first and last words and all nouns,
pronouns, adjectives, verbs, adverbs and subordinating conjunctions (if, because, as, that) are capitalised. Articles (a, an, the), coordinating conjunctions (and, but, or, for, nor) and prepositions, regardless of length, are lowercased unless they are the first or last word of the title or subtitle

CENTURIES AND DECADES
- Spell out (in lower case) references to centuries. Decades may be spelt out or written numerically with apostrophes. Eg: The twentieth century; during the eighties and nineties/ the ‘80s and ‘90s.
- If decades are identified by their century, numerals are used. Eg: The 1880s/1990s. No apostrophe is needed between the years and the ‘s’

CURRENCIES
- Format: US$100, 100 euro, INR 100, £100
- Keep unit consistent
- If more than one denomination used, provide equivalent in primary currency

DATES
- Day Month Year format: 5 September 1990
- When referring to collective period of years, no apostrophe before the ‘s’. Eg: during the 1990s, in the 60s
- Years without commas: 1908

FULL POINT
- Use periods in the case of initials, as in S.S. Gill
- Abbreviations and contractions consisting of upper and lower cases take full points as in Mt. (Mount) St. (Saint) Ph.D (Doctor of Philosophy), exceptions to be made for Rs, Dr (Doctor) Revd (Reverend: not Rev), Mr, Mrs, Mme, Mlle (Mademoiselle), Prof, Col, where full points are not required

ITALICS
- Common/generic Indian words are usually not to be italicised, except in direct dialogue.
- Italicise the first instance only of a non-English word but keep in roman henceforth.
- Use of italics should be kept to the minimum.
- Italicise: Names of books and journals.
- Italicise: Titles of plays, films, TV shows
- Do not italicise: titles of articles, Ph.D theses and unpublished material.
- Do not italicise: Words like masala, dhoti, kurta, salaam; names of well-known art forms, like ghazal, bhangra, bharatnatyam, kathak; and terms of respect like ji, dada, mama, chacha
- Do not italicise: the Bible, the Koran, the Bhagavad Gita, Upanishads etc. Adjectives derived from the names of sacred books are generally lower cased (biblical, scriptural), but a few retain the initial capital like Koranic, Vedic
etc. is always in roman typeface with a full point
et al. is always in italics. Other non-English words, as in French, Latin etc. will be italicised. Follow the dictionary rule.

NUMBERS
Spell out numbers from one to nine; use numerals thereafter (one-nine; 10-...) except when number is part of a measurement (5 kWh, US$2 billion)
Avoid using Indian number system unless context-specific (100,000 instead of 1,00,000)
Commas in thousands: 1,840
Hyphenate fractions: one-third, two-thirds, one-sixth except one quarter
When both a whole number and a fraction are spelt out, use a hyphen only in the fraction, as in one and three-quarters.
Decimal numbers are always in numerals, as in 1.05.
In decimals use the full point. Eg: 7.06, 0.76 (not .76)
In scientific and statistical copy use the symbol % for a percentage no space between numeral and symbol – 35%); in humanistic copy, the word percent should be used (one word and not two)
Distances, weights, measures, as in miles, kilometres, pounds, kilograms, feet, inches are usually indicated in words, although long or complicated figures can be given in numerals.
Roman numerals to be preferred in such cases as Krishnaraya II – which are not to be broken up in mid-sentence and are not be followed by a full point except at the end of a sentence.
Use figures in 9.00 a.m., words in nine o’clock, no hyphen in half past nine

PUNCTUATION
Single space after periods
Do not overuse commas (for example, delete unnecessary commas after ‘that’ or ‘while’)
Asking a question:
- Frame it either as a question: Will the government deliver? Can India find a way to engage with China in Afghanistan?
- Or, if being written as a normal sentence: The question to ask is if the government will deliver. The question that arises is whether India can find a way to engage with China in Afghanistan.
Colons and semi-colons: Ensure you are using the right punctuation mark. Do not overuse them
Hyphens: Add when using a term as an adjective before a noun (A long-term plan) but not otherwise (the plan is long term)
Use double quotes for quotations; single quotes to emphasise a term or phrase
Keep quotation marks and endnotes outside the period or comma: The term increasingly being used is ‘Beijing Consensus.’¹ According to the latest NASSCOM report,¹ …

OTHER RULES
- Phrases with ‘such as’ and ‘including’ never end with ‘etc.’ or ‘among others’ Eg: The indicators include level of urbanisation and migration trends NOT The indicators include level of urbanisation, migration trends, etc.
- Countries (and ships) are ‘it’ and ‘which’ not ‘she’ or ‘who’
- No ‘the’ before a country’s name unless plural names (the UAE, the US, the Philippines)
- Avoid overusing ‘would’ (instead use ‘will’)
- Avoid overusing ‘Also’ at the beginning of sentences. Use other conjunctions instead (further, moreover, in addition…) but avoid overusing them as well
- Avoid using ‘in fact’ unless
- Avoid repetition of words, phrases, punctuation
- **Do not use:**
  - Hence (antiquated)
  - Discuss about / mention about (no ‘about’ needed)
  - 20 years back (use ‘ago’)
  - In order to (it suffices to simply say ‘to’)
  - It is not… rather, it is…. (use ‘instead’)
  - ‘besides’ when using it as to mean ‘also,’ ‘in any case,’ or ‘anyway’
ORF Citation Style Guide

- Use endnotes instead of in-text citations or footnotes
- Format: Chicago Manual of Style *see here and here
- Do not include access dates

**SOURCES FOR IMAGES/GRAPHICS**
- Include source at the bottom of the figure in italics. (*Source: World Bank data*)

**Book: One Author**

*Note:*

*Shortened note:*
Doniger, *Splitting the Difference*

*Bibliography:*

**Book: Two Author**

*Note:*

*Shortened note:*
Cowlishaw and Dunbar, *Primate Conservation Biology*

*Bibliography:*

**Book: Four or More Authors**

*Note:*

*Shortened note:*
Laumann et al., *The Social Organization of Sexuality*

*Bibliography:*
Editor, translator, or compiler instead of author

Note:

Shortened note:
Lattimore, *The Iliad of Homer*

Bibliography:

Editor, translator, or compiler in addition to author

Note:

Shortened note:
Bonnefoy, “New and Selected Poems”

Bibliography:

Chapter or other part of a book

Note:

Shortened note:
Wiese, “‘The House I Live In’: Race, Class, and African American Suburban Dreams in the Postwar United States,” 101.

Bibliography:

Chapter of an edited volume originally published elsewhere (as in primary sources)

Note:
Smith, “The Origin of Altruism”

Bibliography:

Article in an online journal

Note:

Shortened note:
Hlatky et al., “Quality-of-Life and Depressive Symptoms in Postmenopausal Women”

Bibliography:

Popular magazine article

Note:

Shortened note:
Martin, “Sports-Interview Shocker”

Bibliography:

Newspaper article

Newspaper articles may be cited in running text (“As William Niederkorn noted in a *New York Times* article on June 20, 2002, . . .”) instead of in endnotes. A note may be added if a more formal citation is needed.

Note:

Shortened note:
Niederkorn, “A Scholar Recants on His ‘Shakespeare’ Discovery”
Bibliography:

Book review

Note:

Shortened note:
Gorman, “Endangered Species”

Bibliography:

Thesis or dissertation

Note:

Shortened note:
Amundin, “Click Repetition Rate Patterns,” pp 25.

Bibliography:

Paper presented at a meeting or conference

Note:

Shortened note:
Doyle, “Howling Like Dogs”

Bibliography:

Website
Websites may be cited in running text (“On its website, the Evanston Public Library Board of Trustees states . . .”) instead of endnotes. A note may be added if a more formal citation is needed.

**Note:**

**Shortened note:**
Evanston Public Library, “Strategic Plan”

**Bibliography:**

**Weblog entry or comment**

Weblog entries or comments may be cited in running text (“In a comment posted to the Becker-Posner Blog on March 6, 2006, Peter Pearson noted . . .”) instead of in endnotes. A note may be added if a more formal citation is needed.

**Note:**

**Shortened note:**
Pearson, comment on “The New American Dilemma”

**Bibliography:**

**Personal communication**

Personal communications, including email and text messages and direct messages sent through social media, are usually cited in the text or in a note only; they are rarely included in a bibliography.

**Note:**
Sam Gomez, Facebook message to author, August 1, 2017.

**Item in online database**

**Note:**

Social media content

Citations of content shared through social media can usually be limited to the running text (as in the first example below). A note may be added if a more formal citation is needed.

In place of a title, quote up to the first 160 characters of the post.

In text:
Conan O’Brien’s tweet was characteristically deadpan: “In honor of Earth Day, I’m recycling my tweets” (@ConanOBrien, April 22, 2015).

Note:
- Pete Souza (@petesouza), “President Obama bids farewell to President Xi of China at the conclusion of the Nuclear Security Summit,” Instagram photo, April 1, 2016, https://www.instagram.com/p/BDrmfXTtNCt/.

Shortened note:
- Souza, “President Obama.”
- NRK, “Medieval Helpdesk”

Bibliography entry:
- Souza, Pete. “President Obama bids farewell to President Xi of China at the conclusion of the Nuclear Security Summit.” Instagram, April 1, 2016. https://www.instagram.com/p/BDrmfXTtNCt/.

Government report

Note:
Shortened note:
National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States, 9/11 Commission Report

Bibliography:

Press release

Note:

Bibliography:

Speech: Found in a Book

Note:

Speech: Found on a Website

Note:

Speech: Heard in Person

Note:
Patrick Dossett, "My Experience as a Navy SEAL" (speech, Atherton, CA, September 20, 2011).

Presentation/Discussion

Note:
Stephanie Portman, "Global Trade in the 18th Century" (classroom discussion, Modern World History, Atherton, CA, September 22, 2011).
Report: With Author

Note:

*Shortened Note:*
“Fragility And Conflict: On The Front Lines Of The Fight Against Poverty”

Report: With no author

Note:

*Shortened Note:*
“Global Economic Prospects, June 2020”