

Writing for *Teaching Geography*

In this article Richard aims to outline the process of writing an article for this journal, and why all geography teachers should consider adding their input to the voice of the GA.

Guidelines for how to write for *Teaching Geography* and the route to publication are outlined on the inside front cover of this journal.

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Teaching Geography relies on high quality, well researched articles on themes important to geography teachers. These can be subject updates, pedagogic innovations, fieldwork techniques or the latest in classroom technology. The Editorial Board is always seeking new writers, and this article aims to outline the process of writing an article, and why all geography teachers should consider adding their input to the voice of the GA.

First steps

Three important factors should be considered at the outset:

- **Writing!** Although articles are never that long, being able to write concisely and get the message across clearly is vital.
- **The geography education message** This needs to drive the article. There needs to be a clear focus that will be of interest to other geography teachers. If you find it interesting and useful, the chances are others will too. Some articles are the product of academic research into geography education, such as Master's degrees or PGCE projects: these are

a great source of new ideas in geography education which should be shared in the journal! Others are the result of an interesting lesson idea or new approach to an old idea. Don't be afraid to be controversial – these articles are great to get people talking.

- **The audience** *Teaching Geography* is very clear in its remit: it is to support the teachers of geography in their professional practice.

Why write?

Although we cannot offer payment for articles, writing for *Teaching Geography* can be very rewarding in a number of ways:

- It enhances your professional credibility, both with your peers in school and in the wider geography teaching community.
- Seeing your own name and that of your school/workplace in print is very exciting, and often generates good publicity.
- By publishing an article, you are contributing to a professional discussion at a national level and this will encourage others to agree with, argue about and re-interpret your ideas.
- It provides a process for you to think about key curricular and pedagogic ideas and become more reflective: fundamentally, it will make you a better teacher. This in turn can benefit your career, and open doors to further responsibilities, such as departmental leadership.
- It can lead to further writing. The focus articles are commissioned, and for these the editors look to established *Teaching Geography* contributors. The GA's Publications Board also needs authors and often look to journal contributors.

Getting down to it

It is very easy to find excuses not to write an article, but these are easily countered, as Figure 1 shows.

As the leading professional journal for teachers of geography, the success of the journal lies in the quality of the articles published. While it is easy to put resources on websites, sharing ideas in *Teaching Geography* reaches a wider audience: the thorough editorial process creates a body of material that can be relied upon for its accuracy and rigour. We hope you have been inspired to consider contributing and look forward to receiving your article soon. | **TG**

Excuse	Solution!
I don't enjoy the writing process	Why don't you consider a joint article with a colleague or your Head of Department? This will allow you to share the workload.
I don't have anything to write about	This can't be true! Think back to that excellent interview lesson you did, or that great idea you had that got the class buzzing.
I still don't have anything to write about!	Could anything be learnt from the past? The GA website now has a <i>Teaching Geography</i> archive going back to 1975 available to all subscribers. Search for an old article on a theme of your choice (Fieldwork? ICT? Assessment?) to find what people said back then about these topics. Many really nice retrospective articles could be written comparing practice then and now.
Are my ideas original enough?	They don't have to be! A new twist on an established idea would make a great article.
I don't have time	Writing a few hundred words really does not take long, and the benefits are well worth it. Writing an article could be part of a professional review process, contributing to an annual professional development target.
I don't know all the educational 'theory'.	<i>Teaching Geography</i> articles should be placed within a theoretical framework, but this does not require huge amounts of research. Chapters in the <i>Secondary Geography Handbook</i> , or 'Think pieces' on the GA website, can provide an accessible theoretical framework for your article.

Figure 1: Reasons to write an article.