

Commentaries in AGU Journals: Guidelines for Authors and Reviewers

About AGU Commentaries

Commentaries may be invited by a journal Editor or submitted unsolicited at any time. They should provide reflections or context around one or more of the following:

- A recent article(s) or special collection in an AGU or another journal
- An emerging or controversial topic in a specific scientific field
- A scientific topic with societal implications
- A recent meeting, session, or workshop
- An update of a classic, historical, or highly cited article or special collection
- An anniversary or other notable event

Although submitted to a specific journal, a Commentary's **audience** is the broad Earth and space science community.

There are **no publication fees** for Commentaries and they are **free access** once published under any license type. Authors are under no obligation to sign an open access license unless required to do so by funder or institution policy, or by personal preference, in which case standard charges for open access licenses will apply.

Format and style

- Commentaries have a maximum length of **6 publication units** (one publication unit = 500 words or 1 figure or table; references are excluded). A typical length is ~2000 words and 1-2 figures. Exceptions may be arranged by contacting the journal Editor.
- We encourage a **title** that is short and interesting. "Commentary on Paper X by Author Y" is not an acceptable title.
- Include a brief ~100-word **Abstract**.
- If the Commentary is about another article, a **citation** must be included in the Abstract and will be hyperlinked on publication.
- We strongly encourage inclusion of a **Plain Language Summary**.
- The **first paragraph(s)** should provide background to set the context for the general reader.
- Specific **results** should be described within the body of the Commentary, emphasizing the broader understanding that is emerging through this and related work.
- When referring to another published article, it is acceptable to include appropriate or brief **criticisms** and/or identification of key assumptions or uncertainties; however, a Commentary should not be, nor take the place of, a detailed technical comment.

- The **final paragraph(s)** should identify suggestions for further work or unanswered questions. Drawing out the **societal relevance** of the topic is strongly encouraged.
- Throughout, write in an **accessible** way and avoid technical jargon so that it can be understood by a non-specialist.
- If possible, provide a schematic **illustration or figure** that summarizes the main concept or issue being highlighted in the commentary.
- References should follow [AGU style](#).

Submission and Review

Commentaries should be submitted to the appropriate journal via the [GEMS system](#).

Commentaries pass through the **peer review** process in the same way as all articles submitted to AGU journals. At the discretion of the Editor, some non-technical Commentaries may not need full external peer review.

Reviewers are asked to consider the following when evaluating a commentary:

- **Scientific accuracy** – Is this commentary scientifically correct? Is previous work appropriately acknowledged and cited?
- **Original ideas** – Are there original/novel aspects to the ideas presented in the commentary?
- **Context for topic and motivation** – Is the commentary addressing a topic of broad interest? (e.g., considering things such as timeliness, potential to initiate discussion/debate within the community, implication for societal or policy action)
- **Quality of communication** – Are the ideas clearly communicated in an interesting way that is accessible to non-specialists? Is the writing free of jargon?
- **Overall evaluation** – Would you recommend publishing this commentary? Do you have any recommendations for the authors to improve their manuscript?

Promotion

- AGU makes all Commentaries **free access** as a means to share our science with broader audiences.
- Commentaries are added to the [thematic collections](#) as appropriate.
- AGU shares published Commentaries via **social media**; Authors are also strongly encouraged to share with their colleagues and institutions, and via their own social media channels.

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