



# Network procedures

**This document sets out what contributors to Network can expect when they write for the magazine, and the procedures that the editors undertake before publishing an article.**

## **The magazine**

Network is published three times a year, in December, March/April and July. The magazine is available online to BSA members behind a log-in, as part of the BSA's service.

The magazine aims to provide a benefit that cannot be found elsewhere: to chart the working lives of sociologists.

It is open not just to BSA members, but to all social scientists in the UK and beyond to contribute. The editors are keen to publish all contributions, bearing in mind limitations of space. The area we are especially keen to cover is the working lives of sociologists in the UK in all its variety. This can include news items about the latest conferences held and books written, features on aspects of life in higher education and opinion pieces on sociological concerns. We also carry book reviews and event listings and, to a limited degree, news from abroad. We interpret 'sociological' in a loose sense: it can include criminology and social policy, for instance, and the activity of sociologists working in areas such as sport and leisure, economics, anthropology and other neighbouring sub-disciplines.

Network welcomes opinion pieces about society, but it is worth bearing in mind that with a production time of three months these may be out of date before they see light; other media such as Everyday Society may be better vehicles for these. Academic journals may be a more appropriate site for detailed theoretical debate, but we welcome accounts of research procedures and findings.

## **Procedures**

The deadline for submissions is usually around two months before it appears. Articles submitted after the deadline are less likely to appear. Articles can appear either as a result of a request from the editors or from an idea from a contributor. It is best to check with the editors if this will be used before writing it.

*There are various types of articles:*

### **Departments and study group news items**

A few weeks before each edition appears, the editors ask departments and study groups if they wish to publicise their work (this can include non-BSA members). These items appear in the first part of the magazine. The editors usually prefer these items to be around 400 words. These need not be written as a finished article as contributions tend to be edited to Network news style and to length after submission. Sometimes extra space is given to a particular item from the news. Occasionally, some items from a submission have to be omitted to allow the editors to give space to all submitting groups and departments.

### **Features**

These tend to be either accounts of BSA events (usually written by the editors) or longer opinion pieces of at least 1,600 words by members or non-members (check with the editors before sending these). Readers can contribute opinion pieces of 700-900 words. These sit towards the back of the magazine. Check with the editors that the subject matter is suited to the magazine before submitting.

In general all items submitted are likely to be edited to some extent, a normal procedure for magazines. The suggested edits are sent to the contributors and a version acceptable to them and the editors is settled on. The most common reason for editing is to fit a story to a space in the magazine. The amount of material sent to us has grown greatly recently. BSA has increased the maximum number of pages from 36 to 44 or 48 pages to meet this demand. That means contributions must be as concise as possible. The other main reason for editing is to make material easier for all readers to understand, including those who are not working in the same sub-discipline as the writer. We encourage the use of everyday English. Please note that the editors write the headlines, rather than contributors, as it is difficult to know the space available for these until the layout is decided upon.

We don't seek approval for some types of articles: news stories of general public importance such as redundancies and departmental closures for instance, on the ground that there is a public interest in reporting these which goes beyond the wishes of individual members. We don't seek approval for reports of public addresses, such as plenaries, because information given in one public setting such as a lecture or a book ought to be suitable for reporting in another.

### **Book reviews**

All readers can contribute book reviews.

A list of books we'd like reviewed.

Reviews are usually 500-600 words long.

### **Notes for book reviewers**

1. A good length for book reviews is about 600 words. We may edit this down slightly, but we will check any significant changes with you before publication. Some hints on style are given at the end of this guide.
2. We set the details of the books out as follows, in this order:
  - Title
  - Author (first name, middle initial if given, surname)
  - Publisher's name
  - Year of publication
  - Number of pages (for simplicity, add the last page number in the book to the number of unnumbered pages in the introduction to give one overall total)
  - Price for hardback, price for paperback (if known; if not, 'no price stated' is fine)
  - ISBN (13-digit, for the hardback version)
3. At the end of review we will state your job title (Dr, Professor, etc), your name, your centre or department, and your university (if you are in academia).
4. Tony Trueman is the point of contact for queries. He will advise on deadlines and organise the review copy for you. He can be contacted at: [tony.trueman@britsoc.org.uk](mailto:tony.trueman@britsoc.org.uk)
5. Thank you for your help. We could not make Network such an important part of the service we offer to our members without your help.

### **Style hints for Network book reviewers**

1. Our style in Network tends to the demotic rather than academic. Readers with limited time will appreciate clear, simple language, though this need not preclude expressing complex arguments. Reviewers can assume that standard sociological terms and references to significant writers will be understood by readers, but terminology specific to a sub-discipline should be explained fully for those not working in it.
2. Don't assume the readers will have read the book, or intend to read it, or have read any of the works by the book's author. Many readers will have very limited knowledge of the general subject area. So the review must be comprehensible as a piece in itself. Try a thought experiment: if you were to read the review to Master's sociology students whose degrees do not cover the area tackled by the book, would they understand it?

3. If a person (other than the book's author and well-known sociological figures) is mentioned, say who they are briefly: "This book makes frequent reference to the Indian sociologist Meera Kosambi, who wrote on women's studies and urban sociology.."
4. Six hundred words is quite limited, so don't feel the need to summarise each chapter of the book. Rather, give a flavour of the work overall. What is its main message? How does it add to the store of sociological knowledge? What are its strengths and weaknesses? What is missing from it?
5. Make the review lively and entertaining: quote from the more interesting or controversial aspects of the book, use direct and active sentences, try a metaphor or two, relate the book to your own life and studies, be humorous.
6. What does a well-written review look like? These are good examples:  
<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2024/jan/28/the-men-of-1924-britains-first-labour-government-peter-clark-the-wild-men-david-torrance-review-remarkable-story-first-labour-government-ramsay-macdonald>  
<http://www.theguardian.com/books/2015/aug/09/syria-burning-isis-death-arab-spring-review-revolt-hell>  
<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2024/feb/04/empireworld-how-british-imperialism-has-shaped-globe-by-sathnam-sanghera-review-the-charge-sheet-against-rule-britannia>