



The MOC Submission & Style Guide

Submissions

Authors

The MOC is pleased to publish authors from a wide variety of backgrounds. The salience of an article's topic, rigor of its analysis, and quality of its prose count for more than the pedigree of the author.

Graduate students and young professionals are encouraged to submit pitches.

Topics

The MOC welcomes submissions on a wide variety of subjects pertaining to maritime affairs. Articles should not simply describe an issue but rather should provide readers with a cogent argument.

Potential topic areas include but are not limited to:

- U.S. & foreign sea services (Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, and Merchant Marines)
- Shipbuilding, shipping, port operations, and other commercial maritime issues
- Technology as it relates to the sea or seafaring
- National security/foreign policy issues
- Strategy and geopolitics
- Maritime history (must have relevance to contemporary issues)
- Energy extraction, fishing, and other “blue economy” issues
- Law of the sea
- International perspectives on maritime issues around the world

As a rule, “if the topic touches water” it is something *The MOC* may be interested in publishing.

Article Pitches

Please email article ideas to Nick Weising (nweising@navyleague.org) with a brief pitch describing the issue and argument you would like to address.



Completed first drafts are also welcome, though not required. Please ensure drafts conform with the guidelines below.

Please allow two business days (48 hours) for a response. If we do not respond in that time, please feel free to pitch your article elsewhere.

If we decide to move forward with your pitch, we will offer feedback on the idea and discuss a timeline for submission of a first draft.

Please be advised that *The MOC* only accepts first publications and articles which are not currently under consideration by other publications.

Article Submissions

Once a pitch is approved, please submit articles as a *double-spaced* Microsoft Word document with a file name that indicates your last name and the article's title.

Upon receipt of your article draft, it will undergo review by the Center for Maritime Strategy staff for style and substance. Authors will receive a marked-up version of the piece with edits and comments. This may include suggestions for substantive revisions.

Once necessary changes have been made and the article has been re-submitted, it will be scheduled for publication based on the next available slot in our publishing calendar. *The MOC*, publishes twice-weekly (usually Tuesday-Thursday) with limited exceptions for holidays.

Plagiarism & Artificial Intelligence (AI)

The MOC only accepts original, first-run articles submitted directly by the author(s). Authors certify that their work is completely original, wholly their own, and that no portion of their article has been copied from another source without proper attribution (i.e. directly quoted and cited in the text).

The MOC does not accept articles that were written (either in whole or in part) by generative AI, large language models, or other digital creation tools. For the purposes of determining authorship, *The MOC* interprets the use of AI writing tools to constitute plagiarism.

If a submitted article is found to include plagiarized text, it will be rejected and the author will be permanently blacklisted from publishing in *The MOC* in future.



Abbreviated Style Guide

Article Format

Articles must:

- Be between 800 and 1500 words in length.
 - *The MOC* may choose to run longer pieces or multi-part series in exceptional circumstances.
- Be written in third person voice.
 - *The MOC* team may approve rare instances of first-person (i.e. I, you, we, etc.) articles at the pitch stage, however, this is generally reserved for cases where an author's personal experience is *directly relevant* and *essential* to the argument being made (for instance, a U.S. Navy admiral [discussing his strike group's experience](#) on deployment).
- Include citations for substantive and quantitative claims as well as other arguments, authors, and articles referenced.
 - Citations should be included as hyperlinks inserted directly into the text.
 - All linked sources should be from reputable sources and will be reviewed.
 - Failure to include proper citations will produce delays in editing and may risk the rejection of the piece.
 - Images, charts, and graphs should also be cited (state if they are your own).
- Include a 2-3 sentence author biography at the end of the article.

Style

When in doubt, defer to the [Chicago Manual of Style](#).

Clearly state the argument you intend to make as early as possible in the article. Readers need to know what you are trying to tell them up front.

Avoid explaining the situation or giving excessive context for your argument only to find you have run out of room and have to squeeze an argument into a few short paragraphs at the end. 1500 words is more than enough space to make *one clear, effective argument* on a major topic.

Remember: you can assume a fair degree of *what* knowledge from the educated layman reader; you can *never assume* the reader knows *why* you think what you do you *why* they should agree with you.



If additional context is needed, link to other articles that provide context or background.

Common style errors (avoiding these will speed the revision process and the publication of your article!):

- Only use a single space after a period or other punctuation.
- Use the Oxford comma in lists of three or more items.
 - e.g. “We invited the clowns, JFK, and Nixon”, not “we invited the clowns, JFK and Nixon”. The latter implies JFK and Nixon *are* the clowns, not presidents invited in addition to the clowns.
- Acronyms must be defined at first use.
 - e.g. “The Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD). . . .” You can then freely use “OSD” as an acronym in the remainder of the piece
 - **DO NOT** include an acronym if you do not use it elsewhere later in the piece. This can be confusing for readers.
 - *Special case*: United States should always be abbreviated “U.S.” with periods and should only ever be used as an adjective, never a noun.
- Foreign language words and phrases should be set in *italics* unless those words have passed into common English usage (e.g. *realpolitik*, *matériel*, etc.).
- Names of ships and ship classes should be *italicized*, but their corresponding designation should not (e.g. *Nimitz*-class aircraft carrier, USS *Farragut* (DDG-99))
- Quotations should be used sparingly to emphasize a key point or convey the quoted person’s voice and tone in addition to information.
 - If a quotation runs more than three lines, it should be set apart as an indented block of text beginning on the next line.
- Place punctuation outside of quotation marks *unless* that same punctuation ends the sentence in the quotation.
 - E.g. If you were to put a question mark inside of quotation marks, you are telling the reader that the text you are quoting was a question itself; however, if you place it outside of the quotation marks, you are telling the reader that you are raising a question referring to the quoted material.
- Avoid wordy, convoluted sentences wherever possible.
 - Sentences that contain multiple sub-clauses and conditional statements separated by commas, semicolons, or other punctuation should be broken up into smaller individual sentences.



- Short, clear sentences are preferable in almost all cases and help the reader understand you.
- Avoid repetitive or redundant words or statements, both in individual sentences or in close succession.
- Explanatory footnotes are not permitted. All prose should reside in the body of the essay itself.