

Teaching Music: Tips for Contributors

Be concise. For today's busy reader, *Teaching Music* is direct, conversational, and brief. Write informally and keep background information to a minimum. Convey the essentials that readers need to know to follow in your footsteps. Most articles published in TM typically run 600-1,000 words. Keep sentences short. Where appropriate, use bullet points and/or bolded subheadings to make it easy for the reader to understand your key points.

Write from your experience. Choose a topic you feel comfortable talking about. Think about recent challenges you have faced and solutions you've applied. We encourage contributors to share a draft of your article with music educators in your content area for their feedback before submitting the article to NAFME. Note the highlights: the people and resources involved, the hurdles you overcame, the measures you used to evaluate success, and the lessons you learned. Write in the first person and include insightful reflections that others may learn from.

Make it practical and informative. Include sufficient how-to information and examples to enable readers to apply your expertise to their situations. Use second person pronouns and imperative mood to give advice.

Keep the topic narrow. Readers are looking for one idea or tip they can put into practice now. Narrow the focus of your article for the most impact. Remember the “effective frequency” theory of advertising: a person must be exposed to a message several times to remember.

Be interesting and engaging. What do you want people to feel, remember, know, and be able to do after reading the article? What makes your perspective new or different? Write in the active voice and choose nouns and strong verbs over adjectives to convey your passion for a topic. Elicit an emotional response if possible.

Don't be promotional. *Teaching Music* does not publish articles that focus primarily on an author's company, product, or service.

Feature articles (1800-2500 words) must give a bigger picture view of an emerging trend or topic important to the profession. (See the Strategic Plan.) Features should include a DIVERSITY of demographic and cultural perspectives and represent broad geographic regions of the country. A query email to the editorial staff is highly recommended before writing a feature article.

References: Use references only when exact words have been lifted from a source or when an idea originated with the source named and isn't widely known. No references are needed for paraphrased ideas or widely known information, such as the current teacher shortage. We do not publish footnotes or bibliographies. References for further reading presented in sidebars are acceptable.

In addition, successful manuscripts must be free of factual errors, misspelled words, and poor grammar. Be sure to proofread carefully before submission.