

Rock&Gem WRITERS' GUIDELINES

Rock & Gem is the leading magazine for rockhounding and lapidary hobbyists since 1971. Our goal is to provide informative and entertaining articles for hobbyists and to draw new people into the hobby. This document contains all the information you need to succeed in having an article published in *Rock & Gem*.

WHAT WE WANT

Rock & Gem is particularly interested in field trip and step-by-step lapidary project articles. We also accept articles pertaining to specimen collecting, gold prospecting, club activities, basic and advanced lapidary skills, lapidary artist profiles, and other hobby-related subjects.

Articles that educate beginning rock collectors or lapidaries and promote active participation in the hobby are especially welcome.

Feature length: 2,000 to 3,000 words

Articles under 2,000 words may be used at the editor's discretion, at a lower rate of compensation.

Field-trip articles should give specific, easy-to-follow directions to the collecting site(s) discussed. Research sites carefully to make sure they are not under claim or closed to collecting. The photos should show the site(s) and types of specimens collected. Include a clear, specific, hand- or computer-drawn map of the field-trip area(s) as a .jpg, .tif or .pdf file.

Freelance authors accept responsibility for the accuracy of their facts. Please confirm any statistical or factual information with a reliable source before submitting an article.

How-to length: 800 to 1,000 words

How-to articles should give clear, step-by-step instructions for completing a lapidary or other project (see the How-To Article Guidelines below).

QUERIES

You may contact the editor to ask whether your topic is suitable for *Rock & Gem*. After that, we want to see the complete article, with photos and captions. Only send articles that have not been previously sold for publication (club newsletters don't count).

ARTICLE SUBMISSION

Always provide your contact information (mailing address, phone number, e-mail address).

Electronic submissions (e-mail or Dropbox) are preferred. To submit via Dropbox, contact the editor for a link.

Save manuscripts and caption lists as document files (.doc, .docx, .rtf, etc.), not in pdf format.

Do not embed photos in your document or refer to them in your text.

Include the exact byline you want used.

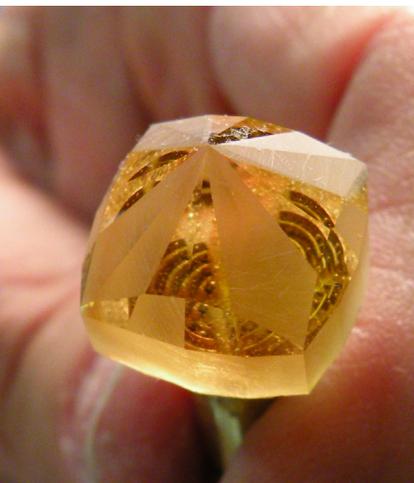
Mailed submissions are acceptable, but materials will be returned only if a self-addressed, stamped envelope (SASE) of adequate size is provided.

Contributors agree to work with the editor to bring their submission up to publication standards.

- All submissions are taken on speculation.
- Articles are subject to editing.

PHOTOGRAPHS

Provide eight to 15 clear digital photographs to illustrate your story. We cannot use articles without photos. Do not send an excessive number of photos.



Rock & Gem accepts digital photos that are:

- .tif or .jpg files;
- high-resolution (300 dpi at 4" by 5" minimum);
- submitted on a CD or memory stick or via e-mail or Dropbox

CAPTIONS AND CREDITS

Type an informative, full-sentence caption for each photo in a list at the end of your article or in a separate file. For examples, see the section How to Write Good Captions.

Use the exact photo file name to match your captions to your photos.

Examples:

DSC00213.jpg
Photo 1.tif

*Do not make the caption your file name.

Give the exact photo credit required.

- If you provide all images, simply state "all photos by the author".
- When multiple photographers must be credited, type the specific credit after each caption.

Example:

Any corundum gem that is not red is referred to as a sapphire.
Steve Jones photo

The editor takes no responsibility for errors that result when a contributor does not provide clearly labeled captions or specific credits.

By submitting another person's photo to *Rock & Gem* for publication, you certify that you have permission from the owner to do so.

ACCEPTANCE

Rock & Gem does not send acceptance letters. Be aware that you are submitting for an issue that is at least four months away. Due to the number of submissions received, yours may not be used immediately, but held for future consideration. We try to process rejections in a reasonable time frame. Please allow us six months to use your manuscript before calling.

A freelance contract will be sent for each submission upon acceptance. Rights and payment are specified in the contract.

HOW-TO ARTICLE GUIDELINES

These guidelines are intended as a supplement to the preceding general *Rock & Gem* writers' guidelines. All requirements in the guidelines apply.

Rock & Gem is always interested in submissions of step-by-step lapidary project articles, especially projects using self-collected materials.

"Lapidary" can include a wide range of crafts, including:

- cutting, grinding and polishing semiprecious or precious gems and stone;
- wire wrapping stones and gems;
- silver or gold smithing;
- stone carving

Our readers are also interested in instructional articles about building their own lapidary equipment, display cases, and prospecting equipment, putting together competition displays, cleaning and preserving specimens, and so on.

Articles must clearly communicate instructions that will allow the reader to understand the steps and successfully finish the project.

WORD LENGTH

How-to word length ranges from 800 to 1,000 words. Use as many words as it takes to explain the project clearly; some projects take more, some fewer. The same principle applies to photographs. Do not refer to your photos or drawings within your text, as not all of them will be used.

Provide a sidebar that lists the tools and materials needed for your project so the reader can assemble everything before beginning work.

ILLUSTRATIONS

Provide a sharp, well-lit, close-up, color photo of each important step of the project and several shots of the finished item. Do not submit blurry, dark or grainy photos or photos with an unnatural tint.

Our artists will need a selection of photos from which to choose; the rule of thumb is eight to 15 images. Quality photos are sometimes used on the magazine's cover.

Black-and-white line drawings are acceptable as illustrations. They must be high-resolution printouts that have not been folded for mailing or .jpg, .tif or .psd files that are at least 200 dpi at 4" by 5".

CAPTIONS

If the reader can't visualize a step from reading your explanation, a photo and its caption will help make the instructions clear. Type a full-sentence caption for each photo in a list at the end of your manuscript. Submis-

sions without adequate captions will be rejected.

Provide an exact credit for each photo or specify that all photos are by the author.

EDITORIAL CONTACT INFORMATION

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HOW TO WRITE GOOD CAPTIONS

Photos are a critical element of your *Rock & Gem* submission, and it is equally important that you provide adequate captions for them. Poor captions can cause your manuscript to be rejected.

Rock & Gem's caption style is to use informative full sentences that tell readers more than they could see by looking at the photo. Only you know why you took the photos you did, so only you can explain what is relevant about them.

It is not enough to identify a specimen and give its dimensions. Use captions to more fully explain an aspect of the article.

While you and your friends and relatives may like being identified in a caption, remember that details about the minerals and collecting sites are most important to the reader. What would you want to know if you were the reader? Put that information in your captions.

If you are having trouble writing an original sentence for a caption, find a sentence in your article that relates to the photo and copy it to your caption file. It's that easy to write good captions! If you can't find any text in your article that relates to your photos, you probably need to take new ones.

This works for how-to stories, as well. Just copy the text that describes the step pictured, condense it a little, and paste it into your caption file. You can also use the caption to further explain the step.

EXAMPLES:

Poor: Two hand samples of ricolite

Good: Ricolite is a unique banded serpentine with intricate green banding.

Poor: David Rogers shaking a sapphire screen

Good: Shaking the material in the screen causes the heavy sapphires to concentrate at the bottom.

Poor: Drill hole in bezel

Good: Using a carbide drill bit, make a hole in the bottom of the setting to allow light to pass through the gemstone.

Poor: Six-inch emerald crystal

Good: Chromium ions give this 6-inch emerald crystal its deep green color.

Poor: The finished "S" element

Good: Twist the end of the wire into a circle, then stretch it across your index finger to form an S shape.

Poor: The author digging gems at the Pitt mine.

Good: The decomposed shale is easily broken apart with a rock pick so the crystals can be removed.

For more examples of *Rock & Gem's* caption style, pick up any issue of the magazine. Read the captions and copy the style. ✍