

CONNECTION
Primer

Plus...

- Literacy
- Government Relations
- Scholarship
- Studies & Research
- Other MRA Publications

Approved by the MRA Board of Directors
February 2007

Martha A. Colwell, President
Revised January 2012

Nancy Witherell, President

GUIDELINES

As a result of the Strategic Planning Retreat in January of 2006, a subcommittee was formed to review previous guidelines and develop updated guidelines for all publications of the MRA. This document is the result of the subcommittee's work.

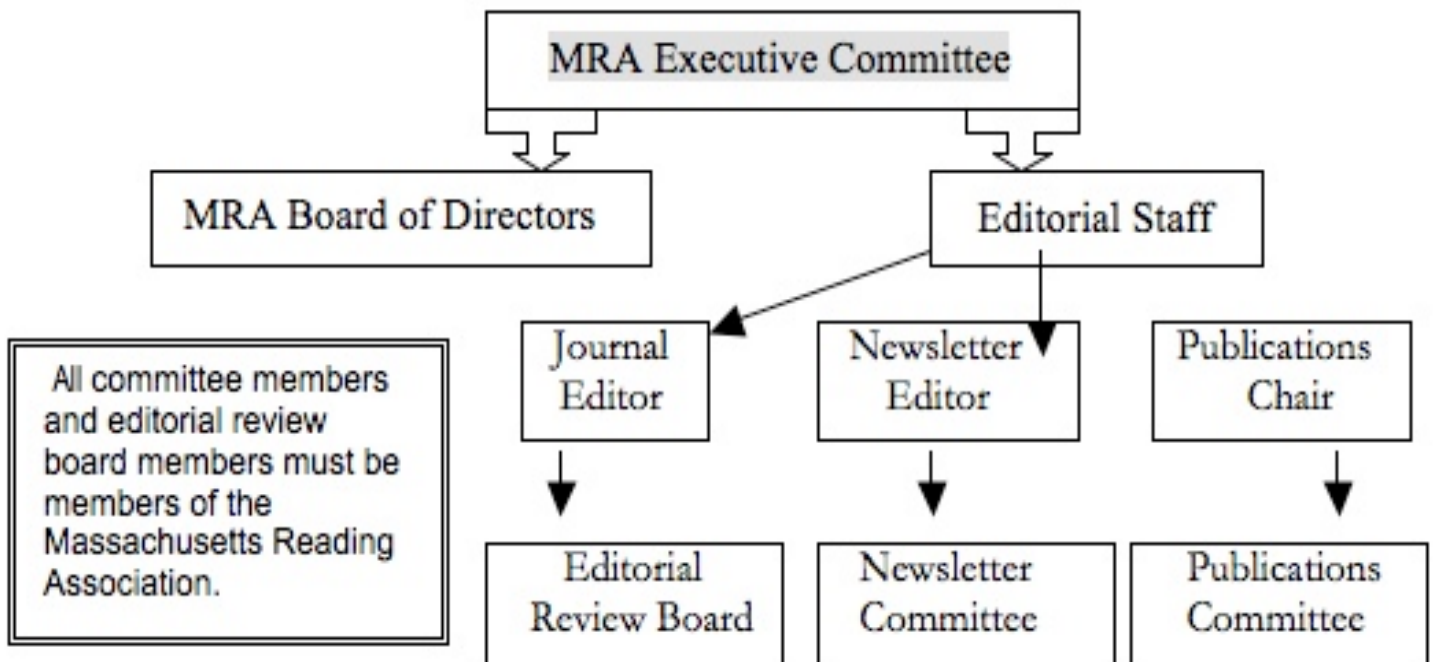
The rationale for updating the guidelines:

- To reflect the professional interest of the association
- to promote consistency of quality in our publications
- to ensure effective communication and expediency within and among committees and local councils
- to reflect the growth of this professional organization

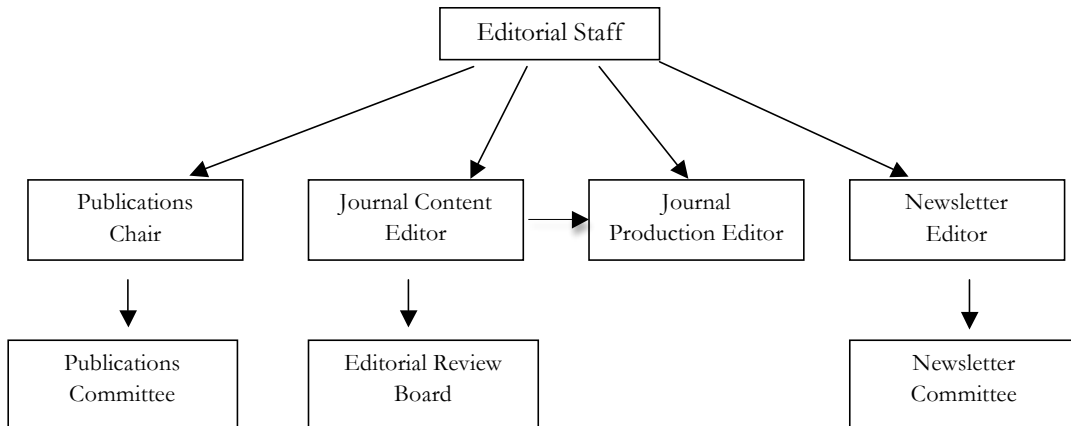
Included in these guidelines are:

Editorial Staff Roles and Responsibilities
Primer Editor, *Connections* Editor, Publications Chair
Committee and Editorial Review Board guidelines
Flow chart for roles and reporting
Information for submission of *Primer* articles
Format and review sheets for Editorial Review Board

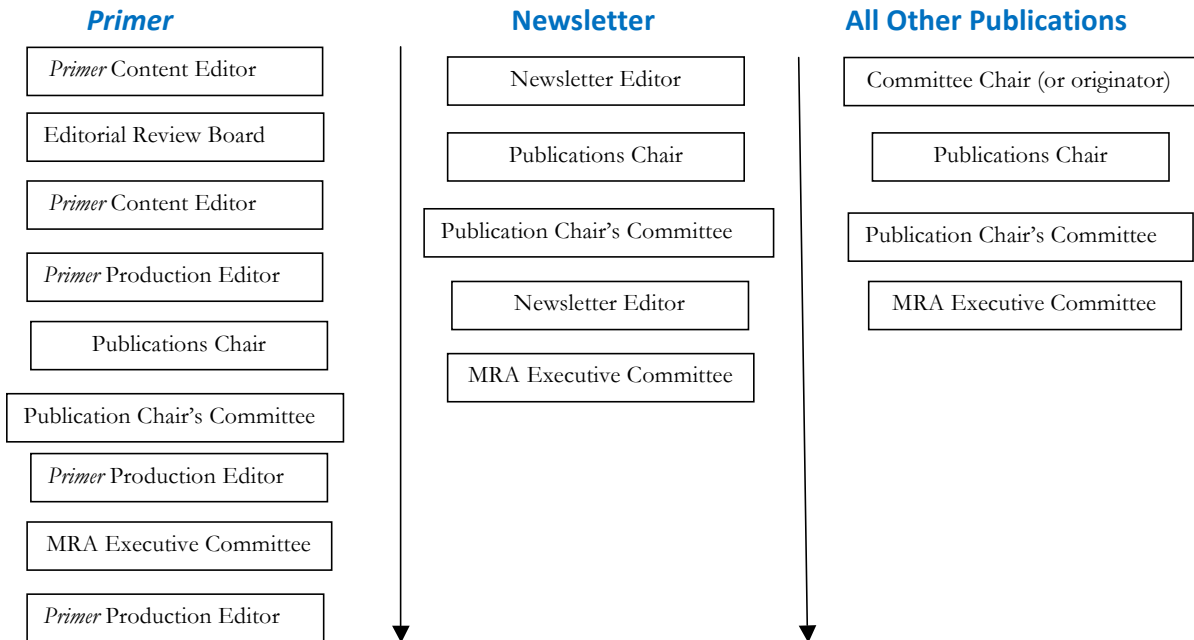
The flowchart below explains the responsibility and reporting system for all editorial staff members, editors, and committee chairs.



Editorial Staff Organization Chart



Editorial Staff Flow Charts: Steps in Publication Process



Publications Committee

Committee Description in MRA Bylaws:

The Publications Committee shall be responsible for the official publications of the Association, including the *Primer*. The *Primer* Editor and the Newsletter Editor are members of the publications staff, serve on the Publications Committee, and have voting privileges on the MRA Board of Directors. All materials to be published must be edited by the Publications Committee and approved by the board.

The MRA bylaws further describe standing committees and committee membership this way:

The number of members of each standing committee shall be determined by the Board, providing the number of members in each committee shall not be less than three.

The members of a standing committee shall be members of the Association and shall be appointed by the committee chairperson; the names of members shall be reported in writing to the President. Committees shall serve for the term of the President, unless otherwise specified.

The Position - Publications Chair

- Reports to MRA President and other officers as appropriate
- Voting member of MRA Board
- Responsibilities:
 - Conducts editorial review of publishable products developed by MRA standing and ad hoc committees (Celebrate Reading, Parents and Reading, Studies and Research, Membership and Scholarship brochures, etc.)
 - Develops proposal for guidelines and procedures to be followed by committees when preparing products for MRA Board review and subsequent publication
 - Works with a committee of MRA members appointed by the President to review format and publication standards of committee products
 - Works with committee chairs to ensure that products developed meet standards of professional publication
 - Recommends to the Journal Editor when materials produced by committees are appropriate for journal publication
 - Consults regularly with other members of the Editorial Staff to develop, maintain, and review consistency in publication standards and maintains contact with IRA publications personnel as appropriate
 - Collaborates with various committee chairs and printer to maintain quality of publication

NOTE: This would not usurp the board's responsibility to review and prove the substance of all publications. This group's responsibilities would address prepublication issues related to publication specifications of mechanics, format, etc.

The Position - Journal Editor (*Primer* Editor)

- Reports to MRA president and other officers as appropriate
- Voting member of MRA Board
- Responsibilities:
 - Puts together a peer review committee
 - Sends out a call for reviewers
 - Publishes two journal issues per volume annually
 - Develops a proposal for journal policies with regard to:
 - size of issues
 - timeline for publication of issues
 - policy on themes, format, special features, etc.
 - Works with a committee of qualified reviewers (Editorial Review Board) to review materials submitted for publication in order to maintain quality of publication
 - Works with article submitters to ensure that material meets the standards of scholarly publication
 - Collaborates with MRA Executive Committee to establish journal themes and topics
 - Collaborates with Publications Committee when materials produced by committees are appropriate for journal publication
 - Consults regularly with other members of the Editorial Staff to develop, maintain, and review consistency in publication standards
 - Maintains contact with IRA publications personnel as appropriate

The Position - Newsletter Editor (*Connections* Editor)

- Reports to MRA president and other officers as appropriate
- Voting member of MRA Board
- Responsibilities:
 - Publishes an MRA newsletter annually or semi-annually
 - Develops a proposal for the newsletter with regard to:
 - size of issues
 - timeline for publication of issues
 - kinds of information, format, articles or features to be included
- Works with a committee of appropriate MRA members to plan, write, and review newsletter contributions
- Works with MRA committee chairs to publicize events, opportunities and deadlines (Annual Conference, Sylvia D. Brown and Landry Scholarship, Minigrant and other MRA Awards, etc.)
- Works with MRA committee chairs and Public Relations Chair to publicize awards and other special events
- Works with local council presidents to publicize appropriate council information
- Collaborates with MRA Board and newsletter committee to establish guidelines and deadlines for submission of information to the newsletter
- Consults regularly with other members of the Editorial Staff to develop, maintain, and review consistency in publication standards
- Maintains contact with IRA publications personnel as appropriate



Primer Content Editor(s) [or Guest Editor(s) if warranted] This person is responsible for identifying the theme, reviewing feedback from the blind reviewers, making final decisions about which pieces should be published, and revising content and mechanics that impact on content.

Specifically, the content editor:

- Determines theme, if issue is themed
- Secures approval of the Executive Board for the theme
- Issues call for manuscripts by:
 - informally inviting appropriate people to submit manuscripts
 - formally placing RFPs in current *Primer*, Conference Program, MRA emails, on MRA website, etc.
- Receives manuscripts and keeps track of submissions by issuing a number
- Organizes the blind review process by:
 - selecting a minimum of three reviewers to serve on Editorial Review Board
 - distributing formatted manuscripts to the blind reviewers
 - receiving feedback from blind reviewers
 - making a copy of each form for the records
 - keeping track of deadlines, status of various manuscripts, letters sent to authors, etc.
- Revises accepted manuscripts for content, style, mechanics, and readability, making any final/additional changes to the piece
- Corresponds with potential authors by:
 - relaying information regarding the timeline and publication status of each manuscript
 - sending feedback from Editorial Review Board to authors by summarizing comments and ratings from Peer Editors
 - seeking written permission from the authors for release of the material by mailing a release form to be signed
 - sending out galleys to authors if substantial changes have been made
 - keeping track of the editorial process
- Makes final decisions regarding publication of piece
- Sends article to Production Editor for formatting
- Sends copies to Publications Chair for editing

Production Editor This person finalizes the manuscripts for publication, proofreads and formats, takes care of printing issues, and sends extra copies of the *Primer* to authors upon publication.

Specifically, the production editor:

- Reads, edits, revises, and formats the articles and other print materials before sending to the Publications Committee
- Prepares galley proofs
- Formats the articles before sending to the printer, includes articles, biographies, and photographs
- Sends a final copy to the MRA president, who should not offer changes unless there is a major problem
- Facilitates printing and mailing of issue and secures current membership roster from Administrative Assistant
- Sends three copies of the *Primer* to each author upon publication

Publication Chair

Specifically, the publication chair:

- Sends articles to committee members for editing (includes mechanics, grammar, spelling, APA format, etc.)
- Proofreads the final copy, corrects any final grammar, or spelling and/or format mistakes

Time Line

March:

- Call for manuscripts issued
- Flier included among materials distributed at the MRA conference
- Submitted articles due September 1st
- Target date for publication of *Primer* is the following March

September:

- Call for manuscripts issued
- Due date for articles is March of the following year
- Articles accepted from the March set will be published in August/September

The cycle will be repeated. One complete year will be needed for the process. The “year” will begin with a call for manuscripts and end with publication of the articles collected from the call.

Important Timeline Dates to be established by the *Primer* Editor(s):

- Call for articles
- Letters sent to authors thanking them for their submission and notifying them that articles are out for blind review
- Reviewers to return manuscripts with feedback
- Decisions made by the Content Editor whether articles are fully accepted, conditionally accepted, or rejected
- Letters sent to authors informing them of decision to publish
- Galley proofs sent back to authors
- Authors to return manuscripts in a timely manner
- Materials sent to Production Editor, Publications Committee, and President
- Materials sent to printer and the mailing house



Massachusetts Reading Association

An Affiliation of the International Reading Association
massreading.org

Date

Dear Reviewer:

Thank you for taking the time to review this manuscript for considered publication in the next edition of the *Primer*. Please review and return this manuscript within two weeks. If you are unable to review this manuscript within this time frame, please immediately inform the *Primer* Content Editor and return the manuscript. The manuscript will be assigned to another reviewer.

All manuscripts will be viewed “blindly.” The author of the manuscript will not be identified by name, just by manuscript number. In like manner, your name as a reviewer will not be revealed to the author. The author will only

receive your anonymously completed Manuscript Review sheet including your comments, along with his/her manuscript marked with your edits and suggested revisions.

The quality of a submitted manuscript is the primary consideration. However, you may identify sections for deletion on particularly long manuscripts, since the suggested length of an article is 4000-6000 words. Alternatively, you may also suggest lengthening less detailed manuscripts. The objective of the MRA Editorial Board is to publish high quality papers.

Return all reviewed manuscripts with comments to the Content Editor. This helps the editor immensely. Our intent is that the review form, manuscript copy, and a cover letter explaining the editorial decisions will be returned to the author.

Please use the following guidelines as you complete the *Primer* Reviewer Response Form:

Manuscript Review Form:

Please carefully consider each criterion on the reviewer scale. The comments you add for each question will certainly help the author to understand your rating and to make the necessary revisions to the manuscript. Be as positive and constructive as possible when discussing limitations and making revision suggestions. Kindly be honest with your comments, but also be tactful and diplomatic.



Massachusetts Reading Association
An Affiliation of the International Reading Association
massreading.org

Publication Recommendation:

1. **Accept:** Make this recommendation when you believe that a manuscript is substantively and stylistically ready to be published and only editorial changes are required. Please give a detailed explanation of *why* you believe the manuscript is acceptable for publication.
2. **Accept with Minor Revisions:** Make this recommendation when you believe a manuscript is not acceptable for publication in the *Primer* in its current form, but you see value in the piece. Please give specific comments for the author regarding those revisions that would be necessary in order for you to endorse publishing the manuscript. Encourage the author to resubmit his/her article.
3. **Revise and Resubmit for Another Review:** This recommendation implies that after the author significantly rewrites the paper, it may be acceptable for publication. Please give specific comments for the author regarding revisions that would be necessary in order for you to endorse publishing the manuscript. Encourage the author to revise and resubmit his/her article. The revised manuscript will be resubmitted for blind review.
4. **Reject:** Make this recommendation when you believe the manuscript is clearly not appropriate for the *Primer*, and when even a significantly revised paper would not be acceptable for publication. When a reject recommendation is made, a tactful explanation of *why* a paper is unacceptable should be provided in the comments section, along with constructive suggestions for revision. When possible, please suggest another suitable outlet for the author's work (another journal perhaps). Please keep in mind the importance of nurturing the writer.

Once again, thank you for your time and commitment for being a member of the *Primer* Editorial Review Board. You make an invaluable contribution to the direction and quality of the *Primer*. The *Primer* could not be published without your hard work and support.

Sincerely,
(Name)
Primer Editor

Manuscript Number: _____
Date Manuscript Needs to be Returned: _____



Primer

Reviewer Response Form

Thank you for completing your review. The due date of your review is typed on the review request that was sent with your copy of the manuscript.

Your name (which will not be forwarded to the author):

Your e-mail (which will not be forwarded to the author):

Manuscript number (listed on the manuscript review request which is attached to the manuscript):

Date:

Comments: Please provide detailed comments describing the strengths and weaknesses of the manuscript. Your comments will be sent to the *Primer* Content Editor of the Massachusetts Reading Association and the author(s) of the manuscript. Your suggestions are crucial to the editor's adjudication of the manuscript. It is important that these comments be phrased in a respectful and reflective manner. **Please note: The Manuscript Review Sheet will be given to the author with your name and email address removed.**

Recommendation: Indicate your recommendation to the editors.

___ Accept with only minor changes to be made by the *Primer* Editor

___ Accept with minor revisions to be made by the author

___ Revise and resubmit for another round of review

___ Reject



Primer
Manuscript Review Sheet

Criteria: The following criteria reflect the mission of the *Primer* and contain guidelines recommended by the International Reading Association. Please evaluate how well the manuscript fulfills these objectives using a scale of 1-5, with 1 being “does not meet the criterion” and 5 being “meets/exceeds the criterion.” Please support your rating with a brief narrative, including detailed concerns, suggestions for improvement, and further explanation of your evaluation.

Does the manuscript have a clear, appropriately supported, logically developed thesis?

1 2 3 4 5

Comments:

Does the manuscript address a fresh perspective, or a timely literacy topic of interest and importance to educators and literacy specialists?

1 2 3 4 5

Comments:

Is the manuscript founded on a solid theoretical base?

1 2 3 4 5

Comments:

Does the manuscript contain an appropriate blend of theory and practice?

1 2 3 4 5

Comments:

Does the manuscript include evidence that supports the conclusion?

1 2 3 4 5

Comments

Will the manuscript appeal to the *Primer's* diverse audience?

Comments:

Is the topic significant and the focus clearly stated?

Comments:

Is the voice and tone of the manuscript appropriate for the *Primer's* audience?

Comments:

Does the manuscript have a writing style that is clear, concise, readable, and grammatically correct?

Comments:

Manuscript Length?

Adequate

Too Short

Too Long

Tables and Figures?

Relevant

Essential

Both

Neither

Citations?

Current

Relevant

Both

Neither

Recommendation:

Accept With Only Minor Changes to be Made by the Publications Editor

Accept With Minor Revisions

Revise and Resubmit

Reject

Comments to the Author: