Author Checklist

Below is a quick checklist that may be helpful when preparing your submission. This list is not all inclusive. Authors are encouraged to review the Instructions to Authors for more guidelines and details. If this is a revision/resubmission, specific issues identified by the editor, reviewers, and/or ASM staff are listed in your decision letter; be sure to review and address these issues.

Cover Letter	☐ Address the cover letter to the journal, the editor in chief, or your suggested senior editor.
	☐ You may list suggested senior editors, editors, and/or reviewers in the cover letter. Do not list these in the manuscript itself.
Initial Submissions	☐ For initial submissions, *mSphere* welcomes papers in any format. At this stage, authors are encouraged to upload a single PDF that incorporates the full text, tables, and figures. The reference style, the arrangement of sections of the paper, and other formatting issues are at the discretion of the author. However, to assist the reviewers, manuscript pages must have continuous line and page numbers. (For revised submissions and resubmissions, some key formatting guidelines are described below.)
Page Format/Length	☐ Double-space and left-justify the manuscript; use 12-point type and 1-inch margins; use portrait layout for 8.5″ × 11″ paper. Add continuous line numbers to assist editors/reviewers.
	☐ All article types have word limits (which do not include Materials and Methods, References, tables, or figure legends), and some have limits on the numbers of figures and/or references. See the Instructions to Authors.
	☐ On the title page (first page of your manuscript), include the full working title, author byline with all authors' full names and affiliations, and the corresponding author's contact information.
Abstract/Importance	☐ Most article types require an abstract (see the Instructions to Authors for exceptions and for specific word limits). The abstract should concisely summarize the content of the paper without presenting extensive experimental details.
	☐ For Research Articles, Observations, and Resource Reports, include a separate Importance paragraph of ≤150 words. This is a nontechnical explanation of why the work was undertaken.
Acknowledgments	☐ The source(s) of any direct financial support (funding) received for the work being published must be indicated on the submission form; any other form(s) of assistance that you received may be noted in an Acknowledgments section.
	☐ Recognition of personal assistance should be given as a separate paragraph, as should any statements disclaiming endorsement or approval of the views reflected in the paper or of a product mentioned therein.
References	☐ The numbered citation (citation-sequence) reference method should be used. List and number references in the References section in the order in which they are cited in the text. Include the names of all authors for each work cited (instead of "et al.").
	☐ Include references for accession numbers and code (with URLs).
Tables	☐ At the revision stage, place all tables after the References section.
	☐ Refer to each table at the appropriate place in the body of the text.
	☐ Create tables using the Table function of Microsoft Word (preferably without using the spacing and tabbing features). Arrange the data so that columns of like material read down, not across.
	☐ Create fully descriptive table captions and place them above the body of the table. Create footnotes for content that does not conveniently fit in the title or in data cells. Use superscript lowercase italic letters in alphabetical order as the footnote symbols (*a*, *b*, *c*, etc.).
Figures	☐ At the revision stage, place all figures after the References section and after tables, if any. The figures should be individual TIFF or EPS files (PowerPoint files are NOT accepted). The legend(s) should be provided in the manuscript file, separate from the figure files(s).
	☐ Multipanel figures must be assembled onto one page if at all possible.
	☐ Refer to each figure at the appropriate place in the body of the text.
	☐ If any figure is being adapted or reproduced from a previously published version, secure all necessary permissions from the original authors and publishers and forward these to the *mSphere* production editor at the manuscript revision stage.
Supplemental Material	☐ On initial submission, supplemental text, tables, and figures should be combined and uploaded as a single PDF.
	☐ For revisions, each item in the supplemental material must be submitted as a separate file; e.g., multiple figures and/or tables should not be zipped together or combined in a single PDF. Legends should not be included in the supplemental files; rather, they should appear at the end of the main manuscript text. *mSphere* will post no more than 10 individual supplemental items.
	☐ On the manuscript submission form, be sure to designate the supplemental file type correctly as either "FOR Publication" or "NOT for Publication" by *mSphere*. If not intended for publication, add the words "for reviewers only" wherever the supplemental material is mentioned in the manuscript.
	☐ Each different type of supplemental material should be numbered with a separate series of "S" numbers (e.g., a set of files that includes a movie and two figures should be numbered as Movie S1 and Fig. S1 and S2). Supplemental material must be cited at least once in the text. If references are included for supplemental material, add those references in the supplemental item itself and cite them by those numbers. Do not include references in the main text that are cited only in the supplemental material.
Revised Manuscripts	☐ In addition to the specific items mentioned above for revisions, please include a "Response to Reviewer Comments" file that addresses the editor/reviewer comments point by point, with line numbers to indicate where changes have been made. Do NOT include this file as part of the cover letter.
	☐ Upload a separate "Marked Up Manuscript" file showing the changes made to the paper. Your main manuscript upload must contain only a clean copy of the revised paper.
	☐ An accession number or data availability paragraph should appear at the end of Materials and Methods (for Research Articles and Resource Reports) or at the end of the text (for Observations).