

Early American Literature Special Issue Guide / Checklist – Revised 6.23

1. Determine a theme, topic, or author of focus for a special issue, and present it to the editors of *EAL* for approval. In coordination with editors, decide on a general timeline, length, and issue/journal number.
2. Solicit submissions for the special issue. Calls-for-papers will be posted by *EAL* on our website and through social media. Additional marketing by guest editors is encouraged, either through social media or otherwise.
3. Initially, guest editors should collect submissions through email. After the submission deadline passes, guest editors will comb through the potentially large pool of papers to determine the handful which will move on to the peer-review process. For a journal with 4 finished essays, for example, this might look like 8-10 moving on to the next round.
4. The handful of papers to be peer-reviewed will be uploaded to *EAL*'s Submittable portal, our submission management system. Guest editors will be given provisional access to the system which allows for the inviting of outside reviewers, managing of reader reports, and the streamlined organization of potential articles.
 - a. In coordination with the editors and assistant editors, guest editors will be given a tutorial for Submittable.
5. Each paper will be reviewed by two outside readers.
 - a. While they obviously cannot control the pace at which reports come in from outside reviewers, guest editors should focus on quickly returning reader reports back to authors and communicating about the revision timeline, especially in the case of "revise and resubmit." Special issues will often have hard deadlines in the journal's larger production schedule.
 - b. In the case of a special issue where the "potential pool" of articles is fairly large, guest editors may encourage outside readers to look at essays with a clear understanding that there is stiff competition for this particular issue and that an insightful, supportive, but not necessarily "benefit of the doubt" reading will be the most useful.
6. Guest editors will make final decisions on which articles appear in the issue. Ultimately, guest editors retain the right to accept or decline any article for a variety of reasons. For example, if two external reports recommend revise and resubmit, it is the prerogative of the editors to provide authors the opportunity to continue with revision or communicate that the odds do not look good for publication, especially if other essays appear more polished.
 - a. For essays that made it to the "potential pool" but were not accepted, there are several options. Guest editors may pass the article to *EAL*'s editors for consideration in future issues of the journal (with approval from the author). These papers may also be adapted for use in *EAL*'s "Archives" or "Provocations" series of essays, which are shorter but nevertheless peer reviewed. Alternatively, authors may withdraw their essay and seek publication elsewhere, hopefully having received beneficial feedback while working with *EAL*.
7. Review essays are typically separate from the special issue, and guest editors do not have any responsibility in collecting books or soliciting authors. However, if guest editors have monographs in mind which speak to the special issue topic, they are encouraged to reach out and coordinate with the *EAL* book review editor.