

Getting Your Model Railroad
Author Certificate and
hints and tips for being a successful
Model Railroad Author.

Requirements & Rules

“Nuts & Bolts” of how to do it.....

My experiences on being a successful
Model Railroad Author.

Prepare and submit material (*for publication*)
on any of the following subjects:

Model Railroading.

Prototype Railroading, Applicable to Modeling.

NMRA Administration (*e.g.* Officers or Committee Reports)

The material being claimed must be the work of the author, photographer, artist, draftsman, etc. applying for the certificate.

A total of forty-two (**42**) points must be earned.....

Published Articles

This is material that appears in printed media, such as magazines or newsletters... Well.....

Includes → text, photographs, drawings, etc.

Material that has been published or accepted for publication, may be claimed.

A copy of the published material or of the acceptance receipt from the publication, must be submitted as proof.

Points are awarded regardless of size or number of features appearing in any particular issue.

Points Earned Per Full Page

Item	National Publication	NMRA National	NMRA Region	NMRA Division & SIGs
Article or Column	3	3	2	1
Photos or Art Work	3	3	2	1
Scale Drawing of Prototype	6	6	4	2
Scale Drawing of Track Plan	3	3	2	1
NMRA Data/RP Sheet-One Subject	-	6	-	-

More Rules.....

A "page" is approximately 1200 words.

Credit may be claimed for partial pages down to quarter page units.

NMRA Publications (including SIG publications) with a circulation >2000 may be considered National Publications

NMRA Publications with a circulation of >1000 may be considered Region Publications.

Material published in 100% NMRA Club publications earns $\frac{1}{2}$ the # of points as for an NMRA Division publication.

No more than $\frac{1}{2}$ of your total required points (21) may be claimed for Division or 100% NMRA Club publications.

Live Clinics

These are live presentations given at Conventions, Division meetings, etc.

In order to be eligible for credit:

- 1) It must be prepared and presented by the member applying for the certificate;
- 2) It must be at least 30 minutes in length;
- 3) It must include a handout (a copy of the handout must be included with the certificate application.)

Points Earned For Live Clinics

Item	National	Region	Division
Given At NMRA Sponsored Events	6	4	2
Given at non- NMRA Sponsored Events	3	2	1

A live clinic can only be claimed for Model Railroad Author points once, even if it presented more than once.

Additional presentations of a clinic earn credit towards Association Volunteer!

Points Earned For Live Clinics towards Association Volunteer

Item	National	Region	Division
Assoc. Volunteer Points	3	2	2

A live clinic can only be claimed for Model Railroad Author points once,
even if it presented more than once.

Additional presentations of a clinic earn credit towards Association Volunteer!

Once created, that Clinic still has value!!!! Do it again!

Instructional Video Tapes and Multi-Media

Presentations specifically created by the member applying for the certificate using video tape or other multi-media.

This production process will generally involve such things as:
preparing a shooting script; a story board; creating close up shots to illustrate the material; etc.

Videotaping your live clinic is not acceptable!!!

If the presentation is non-interactive (for example, a video tape), then it earns credit at the rate of 1/2 point per minute of the presentation.

If the presentation is interactive (requiring input from the viewer as it goes), then it earns credit as an "Electronic Publication".....

To earn credit for an Instructional Video Tape or Multi-Media Presentation, it must be submitted to the Member Services Department Director for use by the Kalmbach Memorial Library, or directly to the AP Executive Vice Manager for evaluation. Include the letter of acceptance with the Author certificate application.

Electronic Publications

This is for material published on a public electronic forum, such as the Internet.

This material earns credit at the same rate as Published Articles in Region publications.

All photos, drawings, etc. are treated as 1/3 of a page.

Material that is published in more than one place or way (for example, both in a magazine and electronically, or in multiple electronic formats) can only earn credit once.

The address (URL) of the material must be included with the certificate application.

If the material is published on a non-publicly accessible forum (e.g. a private BBS), it is not eligible for credit.

No more than ½ of the total required points (21) may be claimed for Electronic Publications.

General:

Final determination of what material is acceptable for credit, and how much credit it earns, lies with the AP Department Executive Vice Manager.

For all material that is the work of more than one person, each person may claim 1/2 of the applicable points, provided that they did at least 40% of the work involved.

Finally!

Submit a completed **Statement of Qualifications** (SOQ) which shall include:

a list of all material claimed giving the subject matter;
Name(s) of the publication(s);
Place(s) of presentation(s), the dates, and the handouts.

The number of points claimed for each item must be shown.

When in doubt:

Contact your Division AP Manager:

Brian Sheron, MMR

→ Superintendent@potomac-nmra.org

Or your Region AP Manager:

Charlie Flichman, MMR

→ cwflich@aol.com

Or National Achievement Program General

Manager: Paul Richardson, MMR

→ achiev@nmra.org

Requirements & Rules

“Nuts & Bolts” of how to do it.....

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Getting Started

- #1: You need to have an idea, process, action, project, activity that you think would be of interest to others...
- #2: You need to decide how you want to communicate this to others...
- #3: Can you do it as a clinic? Essentially teach others what you know.... Remember → A hand-out is 1/2 way to an article...and counts towards your 42 points!
- #4: Can you make an article out of that handout?

Suggested Starting Point #1

Start by going to clinics and seeing what others are presenting AND how other folks are presenting their clinic.

Slides	- tour of the upper lower eastern branch of...
Movies	- history of trolley operations in Richmond, etc.
“What I did & what I got...”	- How I make trees, do scenery, lay switches...
Live demonstrations	- using an Airbrush, sandblasting, soldering
Hands-on demonstrations	- sandblasting, using a torch for working brass
Construction Clinics	- building the Upper Northern SW office building....
Technical issues	- installing DCC, integrating your PC into operations
Hands-on make & take	- make trees, build a car, hand lay track, animation

While you are watching & learning from their clinic, learn how to give a clinic!

What works, doesn't work, what you like and don't like.....

Next:

Present a clinic, make up a handout for credit (get those points!!).

Use your neat idea, process, etc. pertaining to model railroading... work from your strength!

Suggested Starting Point #2

Writing an article for your Div. or Regional publication about some neat trick or model railroad problem that you solved, maybe write social or historical information in these publications....work from your strength!

Divisional Publication – Potomac Flyer
Regional Publication – The Local

Start by reading both of these & the model RR magazine literature
Pay attention to how other folks are presenting their ideas.

Look at other articles in the model railroad magazines for ideas.
Find those articles you like best and try to do yours in the same way.

Again, while you are reading, learn what works, doesn't work,
what you like & don't like!

Suggested Starting Point #3

Merge Suggested Starting Points #1 & #2!!!

These two areas are completely incestuous & they are all you really actually need to get to your Authors certificate!!!

This is exactly where I got started...

Gave a clinic w/ handout at the Regional MER Convention

Revised handout became an article in The Local (Regional NMRA Pub)

That article was “noticed” and kicked up to Scale Rails (National NMRA Pub)

(Take the higher point publication!)

That’s 3 points for a 1 page article & 4 points for the clinic w/ handout !

That’s 9 points for a 3 page article & 4 points for the clinic w/ handout !

Suggested Starting Point #4

Work with your Strength Areas!

Complement your other MRR Achievement areas!

Not everything has to be the Great American Model RR article

Remember, none of your points have to come from National Publications!!

Remember!

$\frac{1}{2}$ your points can come from Division Pub's

$\frac{1}{2}$ your points can be electronic Pub's

All of your points can be from doing a lot of clinics!!!

Not Suggested as a Starting Point (a)

Writing the Great American Model RR article...

But, if you must..... or if it's necessary.....

- 1) Do find past articles in MRR magazines - find what you like & try to do yours similarly – organizational, style, flow – make it your own!
- 2) Do check with the targeted publication!
 - a) Know not only the field, but what your target publication publishes
 - b) Contact the editorial office – are they interested – send a 2-3 page outline/sample
 - a) Communicate!
 - c) Find & Follow their guidelines / formatting / software / photos requirements

- 3) It's not the Great American novel.... Relax & be conversational when you write. Try to emulate as if you're talking to a friend. Just describe what you did, how you made it, what you have discovered, etc. But, be concise & understandable.
- 4) Pictures and/or drawings are a must! Ask friends for help or better yet – learn this yourself – or team up with a friend and split the points!!! Drawings & photography quality must be good! Sharp focus, good detail, no distracting backgrounds.
- 5) Is it understandable, clear, convey the information, & make sense.... Get some one other than yourself to read it. “Fresh eyes”... Don't be afraid to ask a model RR friend to edit it & make suggestions. (Ok, maybe that's a good way to lose friends, wife, etc.)
- 6) Do not commit plargarism!
- 7) Do not submit your article to multiple publications at the same time!
- 8) Do not violate copyright!

So, what did I do.....(1)

- 1) Gave a clinic w/handout at the Regional MER Convention – building a Flatcar

Revised handout became an article in The Local (Regional NMRA Pub)
That article was “noticed” and kicked up to Scale Rails (National NMRA Pub)
- 2) Followed with converting the flatcar to a gondola in The Local (Regional NMRA Pub)
- 3) Gave a new clinic w/handout at the Regional MER Convention – building a Freight station

Revised handout became an article in The Local (Regional NMRA Pub)
That article was again “noticed” and kicked up to Scale Rails (National NMRA Pub)
- 4) Wrote several smaller articles of hints, ideas, suggestions, etc. for both the Potomac Flyer(Divisional Pub) and The Local (Regional NMRA Pub)

So, what did I do.....(2)

- 5) Wrote my 1st non-NMRA Nat'l article – Building a Heinz Vinegar Tank Car – O Scale Trains
- 6) Wrote my 2nd non-NMRA Nat'l article – Building Lauthers' Perfect Pickles - Parts 1 & 2 – O Scale Trains (14 magazine pages...) – (42 points)
- 7) Other “small” articles scattered throughout.
- 8) Wrote my 3rd non-NMRA Nat'l article – Building Clugston's Store - Parts 1 & 2 – O Scale Trains
- 9) Wrote my 4th non-NMRA Nat'l article – Building Johnson's Small Engine Repair & Welding – Railroad Model Craftsman
- 10) Wrote my 3rd non-NMRA Nat'l article – Building Clugston's Store - Parts 1 & 2 – O Scale Trains

And, there's more to come.....

Once you start, you may find you like it!!!

So, what did I do.....(3)

Lots more articles followed.....

2009 -- Took over as MER Contest Chair – many articles in The Local every year

2009 -- Took over as the Traction Action Columnist for O Scale Trains
1 page every issue of the magazine

2015-- Became Associate Editor of O Scale Trains
Generate content, product reviews, represent magazine at meets, shows & conventions

Once you start, you may find you like it!!!

Remuneration!

Did I mention you can even get paid?

How do I plan / write an Article?

I start with a “Project”

I’m a “builder”, so rolling stock or a structure...

- 1) Cross-pollinate this category with your other Achievement award categories!!!
- 2) Plans --- I may or may not have plans to work from & I may or may not make them in advance or even afterwards – generally I do.
- 3) I take a lot of notes as I build anything --- I also take a lot of photos!
 - a. Record what you’re doing as you do it – don’t rely on your memory
 - b. Save the photos!! The photos can be used for the article!!!

How do I plan / write an Article?

4. I transfer those notes into text on the computer periodically → 1st rough draft!
 - a. Helps to fill in the gaps on note taking
 - b. Translation from pencil to computer - translational
 - c. That 1st draft that tells you what you forgot to do....
 - d. Looking at your photos will aid – harshest critic ever!
5. I save everything in multiple places!!! – Hard drives / external hard drive / thumb drive – hard copy!
6. Proof reading – every draft incarnation until I can't stand to look at it!
7. Integrate photos & line drawings last – where should they go?
8. Final proof reading -- Wife, son, some one else.....

My Writing Tools --- Stage 1

Note pad and 0.5 mm mechanical pencils



My Writing Tools --- Stage 2

Personal Computer -- Text -- Word



My Writing Tools --- Stage 2

Personal Computer -- Slides -- Powerpoint



My Writing Tools --- Stage 3

Photography & Software

Photoshop



A decent tripod is highly recommended
A convenient backdrop – tri-fold foamboard
Neutral color surface – pause periodically!

My Writing Tools --- Stage 4

Line Drawings & Printers

Line Drawings -- Chemdraw

Printers – HP 960, HP2120

If you need help.....

Improving your writing skill:

Books on this topic in libraries in the 808 section

→ *GETTING PUBLISHED* by Belkin

→ *HOW TO WRITE & SELL THE 8 EASIEST ARTICLE TYPES* by Barnhard

→ *THE ELEMENTS OF STYLE* by Strunk & White.

→ Ask for help from some one that has gotten their Author's Certificate!

“...I will agree to assist other members in this subject whenever possible, whether or not they are participants in the Achievement Program.”

Writing may be intimidating to
many folks,
but it does not have to be so....