

On the cover



A picture is worth a thousand words, as is a *Nature Geoscience* cover image.

Nature Geoscience is lucky to have stunning imagery to draw on for its covers. Geoscience is a highly visual discipline – from awe-inspiring landscapes to 3D visualisations of the Earth’s interior. Every month, the editorial team chooses the cover image for the next issue. Although we sometimes source or create the images ourselves, for example to highlight a special issue, most of our cover art is submitted by authors alongside their accepted papers. Our covers showcase the range of great science that we publish, but there are many other factors we consider. These include the strength of the paper and our wish to have our cover art visually reflect the breadth of the journal, with a mixture of topics, and spatial and temporal scales featured.

For an author, getting your research highlighted on a cover can be an exciting capstone to all the hard work that went into your study. A beautiful image will pull in prospective readers and publicize your work to a wider audience. We encourage authors of accepted papers to provide cover art suggestions alongside the final files. A cover image can be a field photo, an image at any scale, or even a painting. All suggestions that relate to the paper and its science are welcome, although the origin of the image must be known so required permissions can be arranged.

A good cover image does not need to tell the whole story. Instead, it should visually give an idea about the scope of the work or a key conclusion. For example, the cover from **June 2023** (Fig. 1) features a photograph of a banded iron formation deposit to illustrate a paper linking large igneous province volcanism to subducted iron formations. This image is not only visually intriguing with unique geometries and colours, but offers a window into what the paper is about that leaves the viewer wanting to find out more.

Effective cover images are also uncluttered and might use colour or light to highlight key features. For example, the cover from **October 2023** (Fig. 1) features an image of a calcite stalagmite illuminated in the dark. The main



Fig. 1 | A selection of *Nature Geoscience* cover images from 2023.

requirements for a cover image are met: it is a sufficiently high resolution image and works well in portrait format. In addition, the image can accommodate the journal title and other text that needs to be clearly visible on the cover. The submitted image was very effective and dramatic originally, but there is also a lot that goes on behind the scenes by our art team to turn an image into a cover, including careful cropping and colour editing. The art team have prepared a document with **additional advice**.

Fieldwork particularly lends itself to breathtaking photography. We receive a lot of submissions of glaciers and mountain landscapes and sometimes we pass on images simply because they are too similar to recent journal covers. However, a creative composition can make your image stand out from the crowd. For example, the **July 2023** cover (Fig. 1) highlights a cave formed by meltwaters with the glacier revealed in the distance. It is an image

unlike anything we’ve seen before, and it creates a very beautiful cover.

All cover suggestions submitted with accepted papers are very welcome. Unfortunately, we can only choose one cover image each month. Even if we do not select your idea for the cover, we do feature other images on our website. And a great image can also be useful to publicize your paper, for example on social media.

Nature Geoscience would like to start 2024 by thanking our authors for sharing the many great images we have to choose from each month and our art team for turning our chosen images into polished final covers. As we kick off this January issue with a curious satellite image of a rare earth element mine, we are looking forward to seeing all the creative and provocative images submitted this year.

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