Joe Hanlon's advice on journal papers

There should be three goals.
1) More people should read the paper
2) The paper should be accepted by the journal (which requires 1, above - your reviewers should actually want to read it).
3) The paper should be clear and easy enough that people read to the end.

First, before your write
1) Explain your paper briefly to someone who does not know the subject. If you cannot do it, then it is not clear in your own mind. One of my teaching tricks is to make everyone in the room describe their paper in 1 minute - and I time it. Very hard - but it forces you to pick out the key point.
→ A major reason for rejection is that an article does not tell a clear story. The article must make one clear point and be structured to justify that point. Leave out extraneous material that does not lead to the conclusion.
2) Each journal is different. Look at the style of the target journal and especially the most read papers.

And then writing the paper
1) Make sure you know what point you are making – your key point and no more than one or two subsidiary points. Write the Abstract first, so you know what you want to say. Of course, you will rewrite the Abstract at the end, but this task forces you to condense your points into 150 words.
2) Few journals require boring articles; few journals require jargon.
3) You want people to read your paper, so make it interesting and even tell stories, especially in the Abstract and the first line of the article. But check the journal to see if they allow this, and to see how the most-read papers are written.
4) Minimum of jargon, especially in theory sections. Usually not needed.
5) See what your target journal expects (in guidance to contributors). Does it demand a useless regression, for example.
6) No caveats in the Abstract or the Introduction; such points are for the main paper.
7) Abstract and Introduction must answer the key question: Why should I care? Your "big issue".
8) Most people will only read the abstract and not the paper - the abstract must attract the reader. Do not waste words - a JDS abstract started "This paper represents the first attempt to formalise the relationship between" - you skip to the next article before you even see the point. Never start with "This study", "This paper". From the same issue of JDS: "Over 42 million people worldwide have been forcibly displaced" - that catches your attention, and you want to know more. From the same abstract: "Displaced households experience a significant initial decrease in consumption." A clear statement with no caveats.
8) Conclusion must be readable on its own. Many readers, including me, start with the conclusion.

And at the end
1) Read the paper again specifically to delete extra words, especially " weasel words" - meaningless adjectives like somewhat, perhaps, almost.
2) Check the paper again to ensure if follows the journal's house style - footnotes or endnotes, references, currency, abbreviations, spelling, etc - and to ensure that you have not made any mistakes. Are all references in the bibliography (if that is the journal style)? I know as a referee I am more tolerant of authors who have had the courtesy to make sure the manuscript is "clean" - style, spell check, referencing, word length.