

About Protocols Network

The *Protocols Network* component of *Nature Protocols* enables researchers to upload their protocols directly onto the website. If the protocol is linked to a *Nature* journal paper we will only push it live once the original paper is published. Other protocols will be reviewed by Editorial staff and pushed live as soon as possible.

If you wish your protocol to be considered for publication as a *Nature Protocols* protocol, please upload a pre-submission enquiry via our manuscript tracking system: <http://mts-np.nature.com/cgi-bin/main.plex>

Note that uploading your protocol to the Protocols Network does not preclude publication as a Nature Protocol at a later date.

Please contact us at protocols@nature.com if you encounter any problems uploading your manuscript.

Writing your protocol

All text of protocols on the Protocols Network needs to be entered under one of the following headings. Only those fields indicated with an asterisk (*) need to be completed, the others are optional.

- *Keywords
- *Title
- *Author
- *Introduction
- Materials
 - Reagents
 - Equipment
- Time to allow for full procedure
- *Procedure
- Troubleshooting
- Critical Steps
- Anticipated Results
- References
- Acknowledgments
- Figures/Tables

Choose a title that describes the protocol. If your protocol is based on content from a Nature paper, for example, it is NOT appropriate to use the same title as your paper.

It is important that the procedure is written as a series of numbered steps; and that these steps are written in the Active tense.

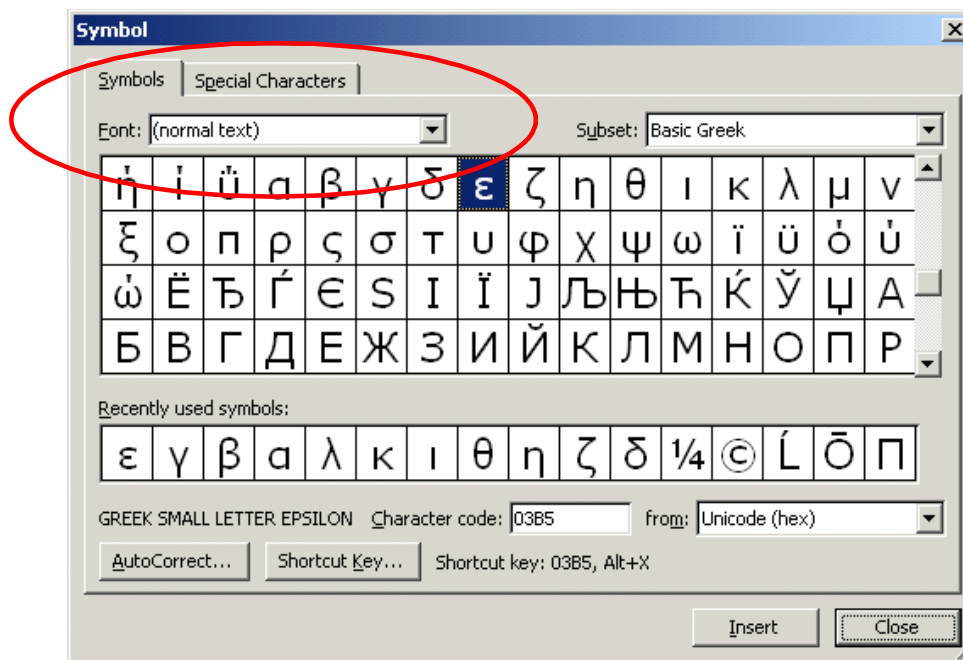
e.g.

1. Add 5 g sugar to 100 ml water.

NOT

1. 5 g sugar was added to 100 ml water.

If you need to include symbols in your text (e.g. α , β , $^{\circ}\text{C}$) then we recommend that you take these from the (normal text) section of 'Insert Symbol' using Microsoft Word.

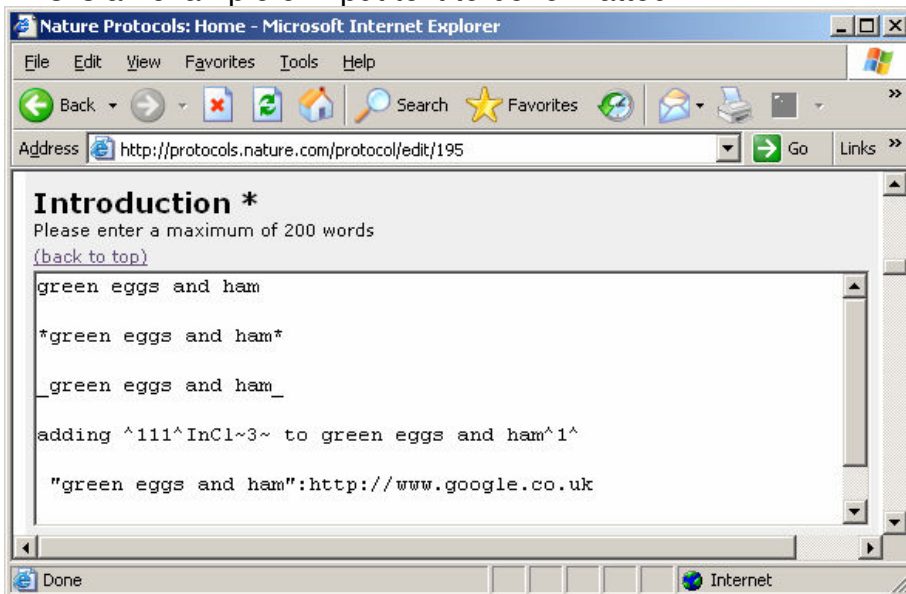


If you use the (symbol) font, this text will turn into empty squares when you preview the protocol.

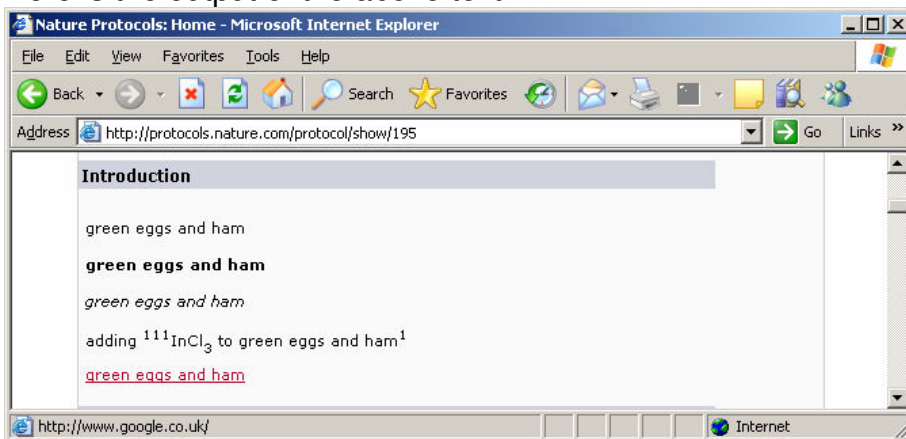
Formatting your protocol

If you wish you can format your protocol. Put text between asterisks (*) to make it bold. Similarly underscore (_) for italics, ^ for superscript, and ~ for subscript. Ensure that there are no spaces between the symbols and the text. You cannot make only part of a word bold or italics. You can also make hyperlinks. For the hyperlink, please notice that you need a space before the first quotation mark.

This is an example of input text to be formatted:



Here is the output of the above text:



If you wish to insert *, _, ^ or ~ into your text, this formatting can be prevented by placing "==" on either side of the text to be protected. For example, "night ==*== shone" outputs as "night * shone". Note that the opening "==" needs to be preceded by a space and the closing "==" followed by a space.

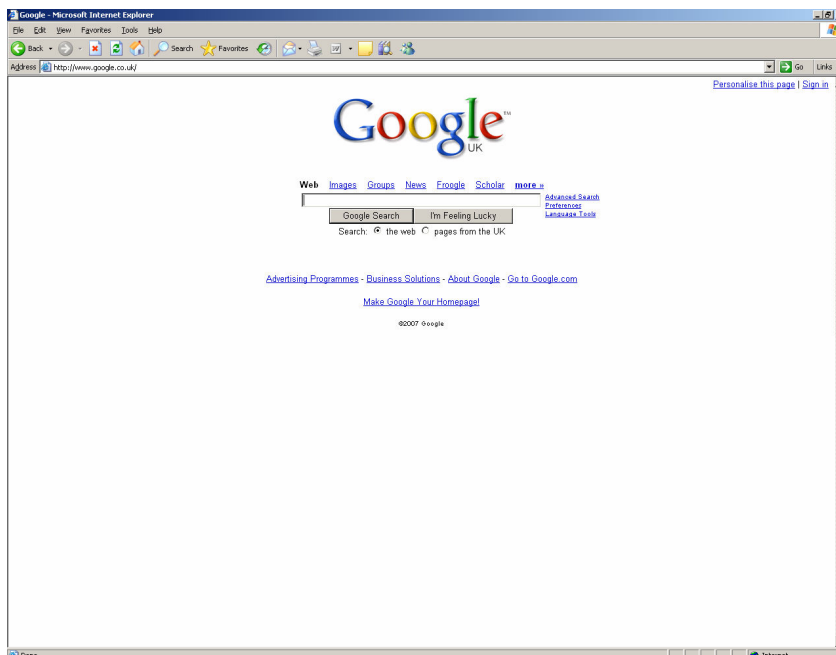
Figures

The maximum allowed width for figures on the site is 438 pixels. This translates to about 12 cm. Please bear this in mind when composing your figures. I recommend that you upload your figures as jpg files. Note that the maximum permissible size is 500 kilobytes. The best, freely available way I have found to do this is using photobucket (<http://photobucket.com/>). The process of uploading the figures includes a conversion to jpeg, and these jpegs are of much better resolution than those obtained using e.g. 'Paint' or 'Powerpoint'. To get your image out of photobucket, double-click on its thumbnail. When the full size image appears, right-click on it and choose 'Save picture as...'.

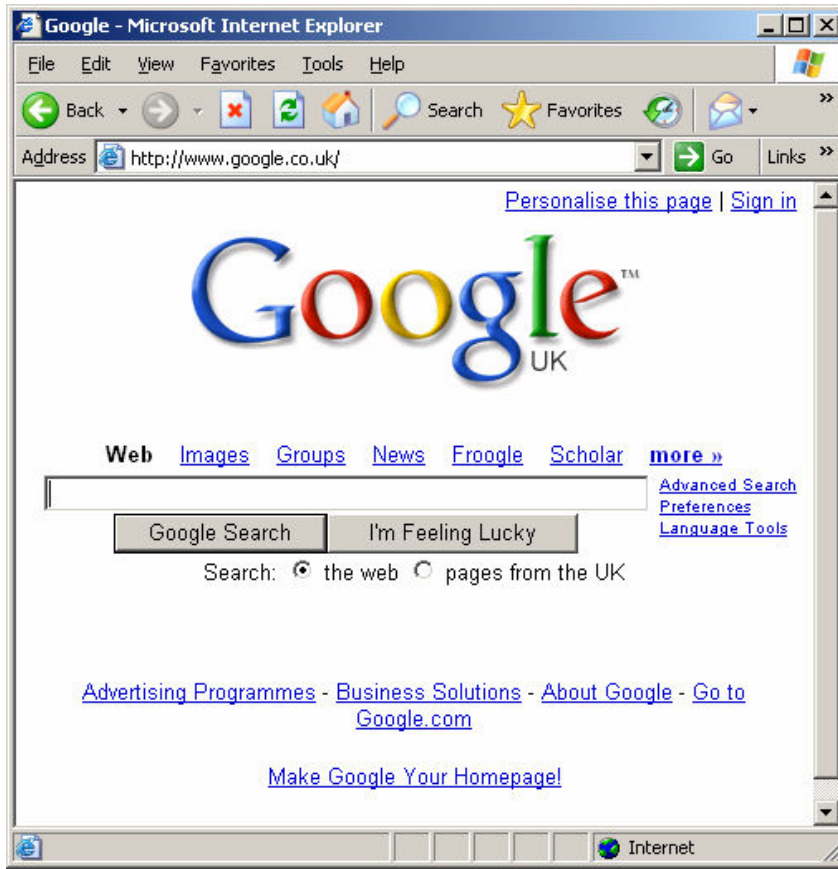
If you create your figure in powerpoint, I find it best to save it as a bitmap file and convert to jpeg in photobucket.

If taking screen-shots, it is a good idea to use the restore-down function of a window so that the important information is clearly shown on a screen with a width of 12 cm or less (or if it is impossible to do this, the smallest possible width).

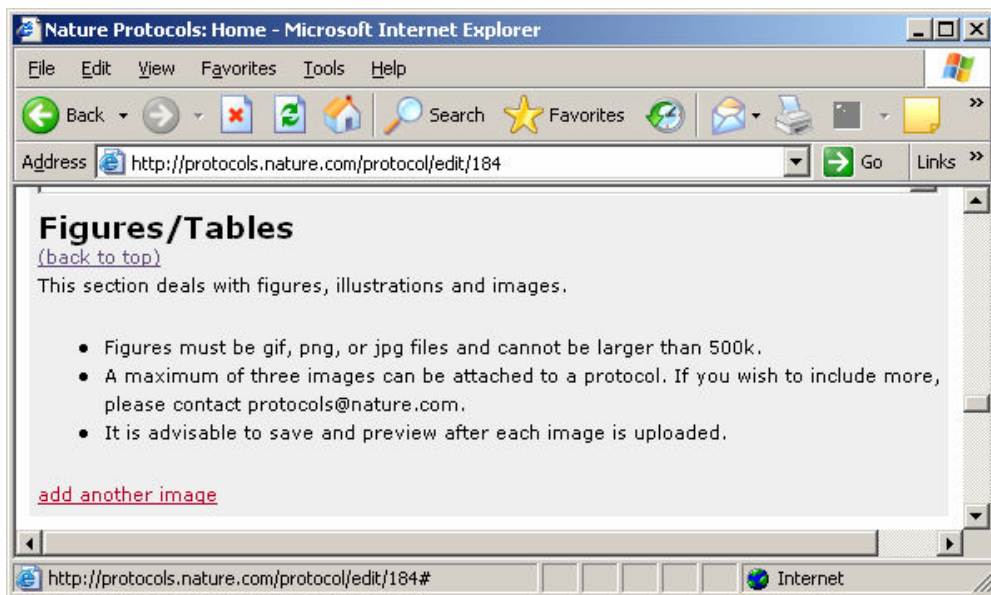
See the following as an example of how you can improve the resolution of your final image by doing this:

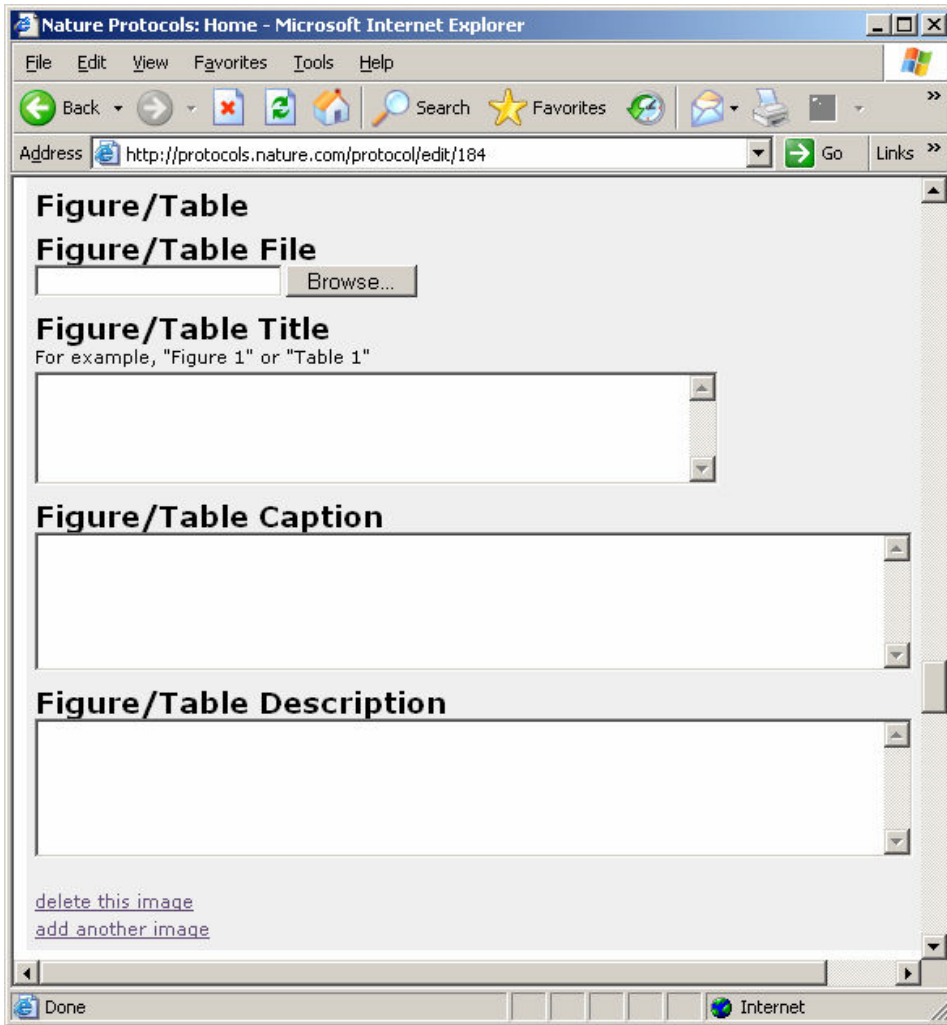


Versus:



To upload the jpeg file into a protocol, press 'add another image' and fill in the form:





It is advisable to only add one figure at a time.

