


The Research Square and Researcher Academic Writing & Publishing Bootcamp Video #3: Journal selection. Things to think about





Academic Writing & Publishing Bootcamp

#4: The structure of a well written and effective academic paper



Things to know before you start to write

✓ Message

✓ Audience

✓ Structure

WHAT IS *YOUR* MESSAGE?

- ✗ If the editors cannot work out your single take-home **message**, they will reject your paper.
- ✗ They will also reject it if you haven't convinced them of your study's **importance**.

“If I’m interested, then my readers will be too”



THE BEST TARGET JOURNAL FOR YOUR RESEARCH

Selecting a journal

Rule 1: Aim high

Rule 2: Choose appropriately

Rule 3: Learn to sell and manage
your submission



1.2 Writing an academic paper

Key point: There are *two* sections
WHY?

Title

Abstract

Keywords

Introduction

Materials & Methods (Data & Methods)

Results

Discussion (& Conclusions)

Acknowledg(e)ments

The general structure of a full article:

- ▶ Title
- ▶ Authors
- ▶ Abstract
- ▶ Keywords

Make them easy for indexing and searching!
(informative, attractive, effective)

Main text (IMRAD)

- ▶ Introduction
- ▶ **M**ethods
- ▶ **R**esults
- ▶ **A**nd
- ▶ Discussion (Conclusions)

Each has a distinct function.

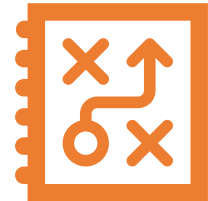
- ▶ Acknowledgements
- ▶ References
- ▶ Supplementary materials

Your title: Keep it short and simple

Effective titles:

- Identify the main issue
- Begin with the subject
- Are accurate, unambiguous, specific and complete
- Do not contain infrequently used abbreviations
- Include keywords of the paper
- Attract readers

Keep your title short!



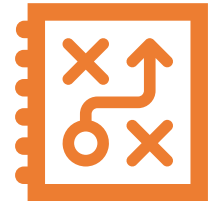
**Studies have shown:
Shorter titles are likely to be more highly cited**

Your title: Some examples

Alcohol use and burden for 195 countries and territories, 1990–2016: a systematic analysis for the Global Burden of Disease Study 2016

Association between physical exercise and mental health in 1·2 million individuals in the USA between 2011 and 2015: a cross-sectional study

**Studies have shown:
Shorter titles are likely to be more highly cited**



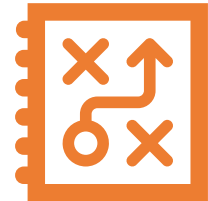
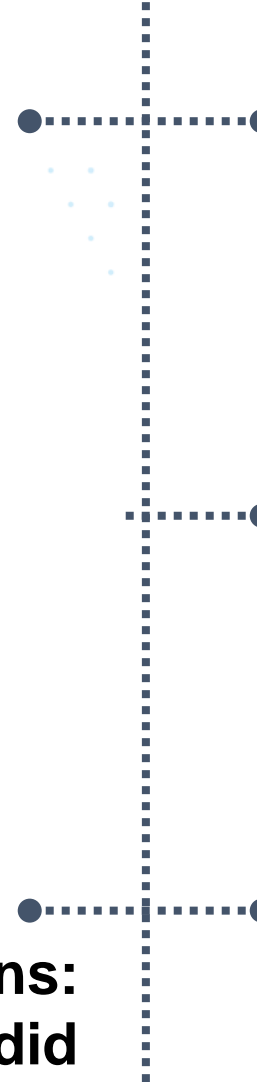
Abstract: Make it count

A good quality abstract is:

- Honest and precise
- Can stand alone (search engines, sometimes all people read)
- No technical jargon
- Short and specific
- Cites no references

Four questions:

Why did you do the work? What did you do? What did you find? What did you conclude?



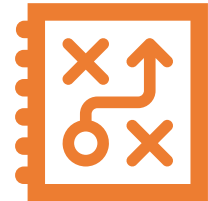
Introduction: Balance

What are you studying and why?

- **Grab the reader**
- **Keep it short**
- **Avoid a literature review**

Three sections:

(1) A question; (2) State-of-the-art review; (3) This study shows

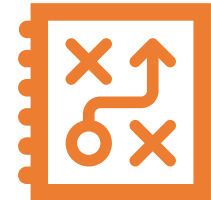
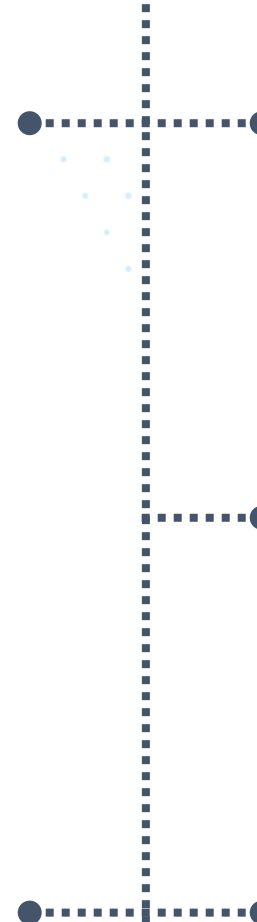


Methods: Comprehensive

What did you do?

- Methodological details
- Narrative of the steps in the experiment
- Do not quote or cite your laboratory manual
- Excessive experimental details can be a supplement

It is extremely common for editors and reviewers to reject papers because of perceived issues in the Methods



Results: A picture is worth 1,000 words

What did you do?

- Summarize the data with text, tables and/or figures
- Use the text of the paper to state the results
- Do not duplicate information in text and tables
- Should be ordered around primary and secondary outcomes in the same order as listed in the Methods section

Follow the structure used in the Methods
No interpretation: Just the facts

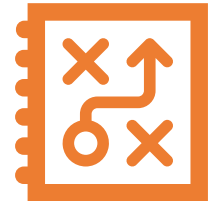


Discussion: Interpretation

What do your findings mean?

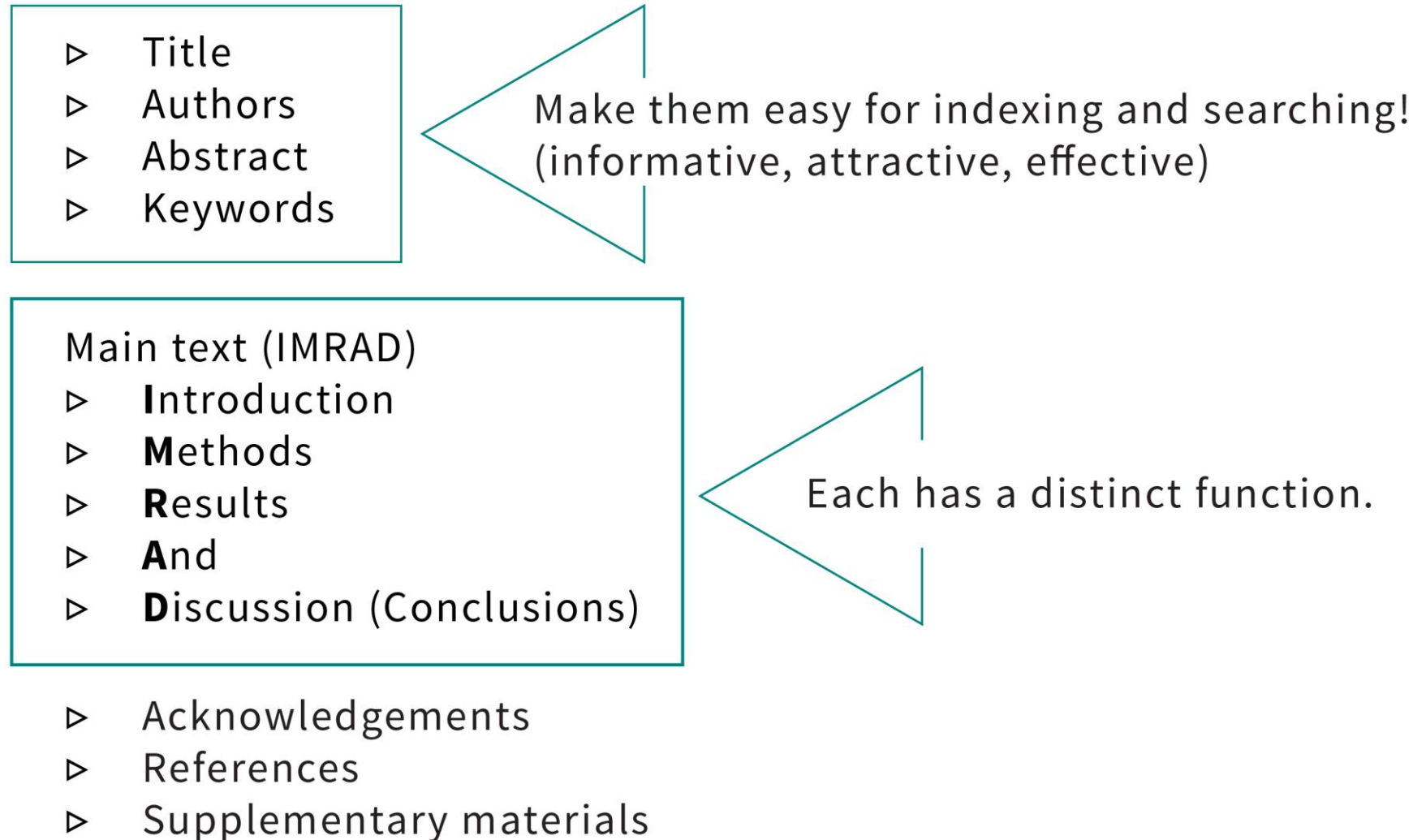
- Start the discussion with a single sentence that states your main findings
- Relate your study to what has been already found
- Discuss what your study means
- Discuss both strengths and weaknesses
- Unanswered questions

**Answer your question. Interpret. Unanswered questions.
Weaknesses as well as strengths.**



PREPARATIONS

The general structure of a full article



1.1. Structure of an academic paper

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