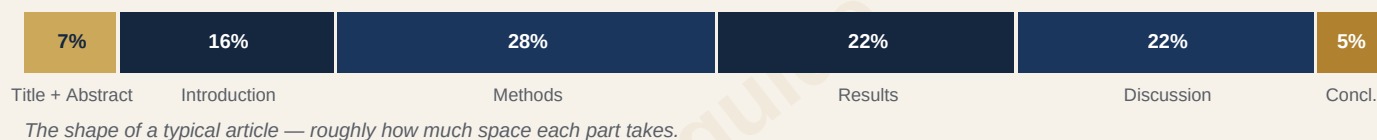


How to write a research article

The IMRaD structure, paragraph by paragraph · Free guide by JHunter · v2.1

IMRaD — **I**ntroduction, **M**ethods, **R**esults and **D**iscussion — is the skeleton editors expect in almost every indexed journal. Follow it and reviewers find everything in seconds; ignore it and desk rejection often comes before the science is even judged. This guide tells you, numbered step by numbered step, **what to write in every paragraph**.



Start here: the abstract in five sentences

A Abstract

one paragraph ·
150–250 words · write
it LAST

- Sentence 1.** The big problem or context — why this topic matters.
- Sentence 2.** Your specific objective or hypothesis.
- Sentence 3.** Who or what was studied, and how — one line of method.
- Sentence 4.** Your most important result — **with the numbers**.
- Sentence 5.** The conclusion and its real-world impact.

Keywords — add 4–6 keywords that do **not** repeat words from the title — they exist to widen discoverability, not to echo it.

The article, paragraph by paragraph

1 Introduction

usually 3–4 paragraphs
· present tense

- Paragraph 1 · The hook.** Define the topic and the broad context — why it matters, and to whom.
- Paragraph 2 · The literature.** What other researchers have already found, with citations ("Smith et al., 2023 showed that...").
- Paragraph 3 · The gap.** What is missing or unsolved in those studies. This paragraph justifies your paper's existence.
- Paragraph 4 · Purpose & hypothesis.** "To fill this gap, this study aims to..." End with an explicit prediction or research question.

2 Methods

usually 3–5 paragraphs
· past tense

- 1 **Paragraph 1 · Participants / materials.** Who or what was studied, how many, how selected (inclusion/exclusion criteria); for lab work — materials, grades, strains.
- 2 **Paragraph 2 · Design & groups.** How subjects were divided (control vs experimental); the independent and dependent variables.
- 3 **Paragraph 3 · Procedure.** Chronologically, exactly what you did — timeline, dosages, equipment models, software versions. Enough for a colleague to repeat it.
- 4 **Paragraph 4 · Analysis.** Which statistical tests (t-test, ANOVA, chi-square...) answered which question, and the software used. Name the ethics approval where applicable.

3 Results

usually 2–4 paragraphs
· facts only, no "why"

- 1 **Paragraph 1 · Main finding first.** State the overall outcome immediately and point to the primary table or figure ("As shown in Figure 1...").
- 2 **Paragraph 2 · The statistics.** Exact measurements: means with confidence intervals, effect sizes, exact p-values. Strictly factual.
- 3 **Paragraph 3 · Secondary findings (optional).** Unexpected trends, minor correlations, control-variable data. Every figure/table must be cited in the text and numbered in order.

4 Discussion

usually 4 paragraphs

- 1 **Paragraph 1 · The direct answer.** Answer the research question in plain language. Did the results support the hypothesis?
- 2 **Paragraph 2 · Interpretation.** Why these results? Compare with the studies from your Introduction — agreements and contradictions.
- 3 **Paragraph 3 · Limitations.** Be honest: uncontrolled variables, sample size, design constraints. Naming weaknesses first builds credibility.
- 4 **Paragraph 4 · Future work.** The next logical experiment for the next researcher.

5 Conclusion + References

one paragraph + the list

- 1 **Conclusion.** Not a summary — an answer to "so what?" One sentence restating the finding, then the big picture: how can a doctor, engineer, or policymaker use this tomorrow? No citations, no new claims.
- 2 **References.** Follow the target journal's style exactly (APA, Vancouver, IEEE...). Cite primary sources, verify every DOI. A free reference manager (Zotero, Mendeley) prevents most formatting rejections.

Two rules that save novice papers

The tense rule — Methods and Results in the **past** tense (you already did it). Established facts in the Introduction in the **present** tense.

The separation rule — Never mix Results and Discussion. Results = *what happened* (numbers). Discussion = *why it happened* (meaning).

Print this: the pre-submission checklist

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Abstract contains the key result as a number, not only claims | ☐ A limitations paragraph is present in the Discussion |
| ☐ Every figure/table is cited in the text and numbered in order | ☐ References match the journal's style; all DOIs verified |
| ☐ Introduction ends with an explicit aim or research question | ☐ Target journal's author guidelines re-read before submitting |
| ☐ Methods name the analysis for each reported result | ☐ The journal itself verified via JHunter — free, jhunter.onrender.com |

“A thief can steal all your belongings, but he can never steal your knowledge.” — Hakim Imar

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