

edanz learning lab



Understanding **IMRAD** Article Structure and Templates for Article Sections



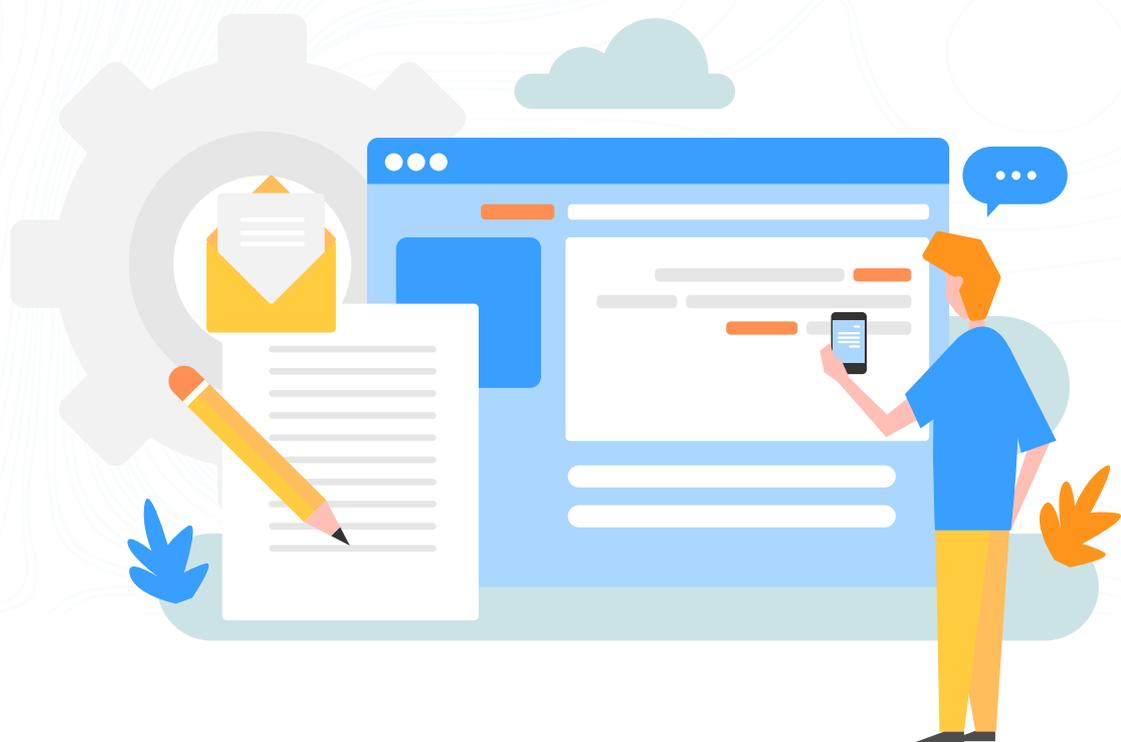
Table of Contents

Before Starting: Preparation The Structure

- Title
- Abstract
- Keywords
- Introduction
- Methods
- Results
- Discussion
- References

Summary

3
3
4
4
5
6
6
7
8
9
9



Before Starting: Preparation

Things to know before you start to write:



What is your message?



Identify your audience.



Know the structure.

The Structure

The general structure of a full article comprises:

- Title
- Authors
- Abstract
- Keywords

Main text (IMRAD)

- Introduction
- Methods
- Results
- And
- Discussion (Conclusion)



Acknowledgments



References



Supplementary materials

Title

The title and abstract are as important as the rest of the paper.



“Brevity is the soul of wit.”
– *William Shakespeare*

Most people, including reviewers and editors, make decisions about articles (including whether to accept them) based on the title and abstract.

Abstract

Struggling to write an abstract, perhaps, for your next paper or conference?

Try the four-question trick; just answer the four questions based on your own work and then delete the questions. You'll get about 100+ words you can edit. It works really well!

Many journals now base their decision on the abstract alone. A well-written academic abstract should be easy to read and follow.

Introduction

The average length of an academic paper is 5,000–6,000 words. This means approximately 1,500 words for the introduction. Keep the paper balanced.

Introduction: Content

Grab the reader

Keep it short

Avoid a literature review

Introduction: Template

1. State the question

2. The “state of the art”

3. This study shows

Methods

People always say that the methods section is boring. But this is the best part of academic writing.

- Think about the “timeline” of your work (what did you do first, second, third ... last): start with data collection and end with analysis.
- Bulletproof your methods section: there must be enough detail for someone else to understand and repeat your work.
- Remember: usually academic papers get rejected because



Methods(continued)

Materials and Methods (Data and Methods)

- This section provides all the methodological details necessary for another scientist to duplicate your work.
- It should be a narrative of the steps you took in your experiment or study, not a list of instructions such as you might find in a cookbook.



Results

Results are facts which should:



Be ordered around primary and secondary outcomes in the same order as listed in the methods section.

State clearly and simply what you found using words and numbers.



Use tables and figures for the main numbers.



Not duplicate information in text and tables.

Discussion

Following is a summary of what to include and what not to in the discussion section:

- Finish strong like running a race. Put your strongest, most significant conclusion last, in the final sentence.
- Rank your conclusions into a list of 5–10 and order them from least to most significant.
- You want your readers to finish with a “wow” and leave them wanting more.



- Don't write something boring and obvious.
- Too many authors write something lame at the end like: “More research will be needed to fully address this question.” Don't make that mistake!



The discussion section should:

Relate your study to what has been already found.

Discuss what your study means.

Look for unanswered questions.



References

It used to be the case that journals would reject papers just because of formatting issues with the references. Did you know that more than 60% of journals are now not asking for specific formatting before submission. The key is to keep your style consistent and take advantage of software, so you don't waste time formatting and re-formatting references manually.



Summary

Here is the summary of the academic paper structure:

- The average length of an academic paper is 5,000–6,000 words.
- Your abstract can be written using the four-question technique.
- Your introduction sets a question and can be structured in three paragraphs.
- Set up your methods based on the timeline of your work.
- Use the same order for items to talk about in the results.
- Repeat in the discussion: relate to the question, discuss, and look for any unanswered questions.

