

Fig. 2.1 AIMRAD: the hourglass "shape" of a generic scientific research article and key features highlighted by this shape.

diagram (Figure 2.1) commonly used to represent the structure of an AIMRAD article, and what it can tell us about English-language research articles. In this diagram, it is the width and shape of the segments, rather than their depth, that tell us something important about scientific articles.

Here we represent an experimental article in terms of different component shapes put together into an hourglass configuration. This enables us to highlight several important features of such articles in a way that is easy to remember. The right-hand part of Figure 2.1 summarizes the features to focus on at this stage.

### Task 2.2 Does the diagram match your understanding?

**Discuss:** Does this hourglass shape also represent the understanding of a research article in your culture or workplace? If not, can you suggest a diagram that shows how your understanding of a research article is different?

Of course, not all scientific research articles follow the simple structure given in Figure 2.1. There are two major variations that we will introduce here; these are presented visually in Figures 2.2 and 2.3. Study these figures now, before doing Task 2.3.

### Other research article formats

The highly cited journals *Nature* (UK) and *Science* (USA) use variations of the common conventions for their article categories, reflecting the fact that their aim

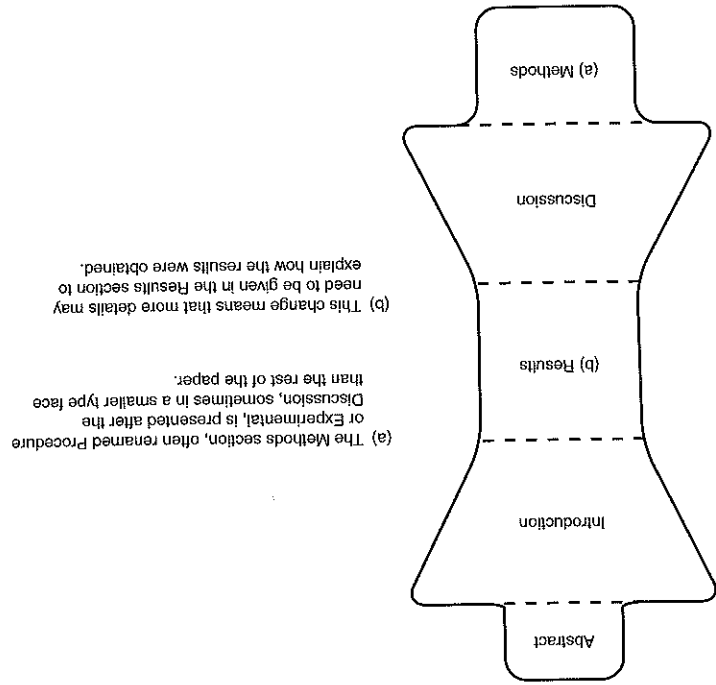


Fig. 2.2 AIRDAM (Abstract, Introduction, Results, Discussion, and Methods and materials): a structure variation that occurs in some journals with a focus on molecular biology.

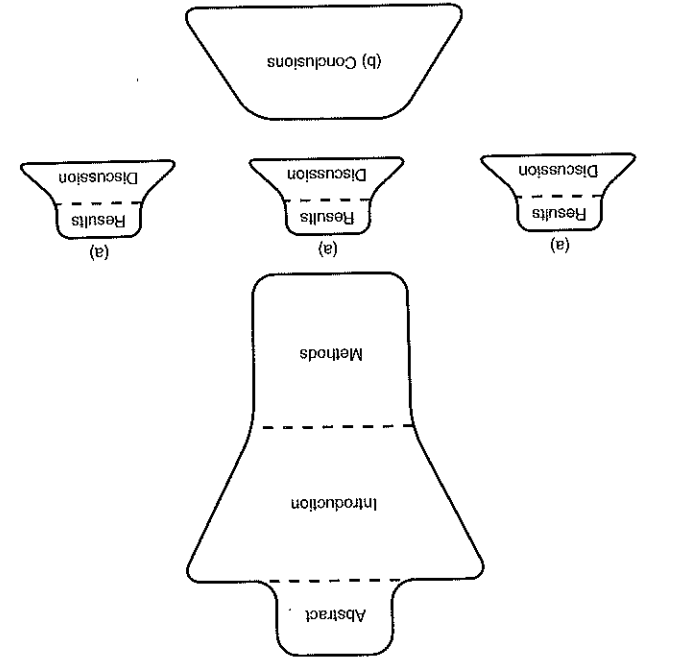


Fig. 2.3 AIM(RAD)C (Abstract, Introduction, Materials and methods, repeated Results and Discussion, Conclusions): a structure variation that is permitted in some journals, usually for shorter articles.