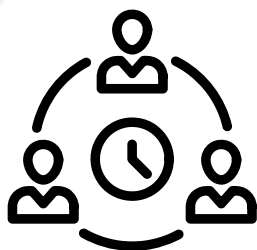# READING FOR WRITING STYLE

Learn how to read a paper in your field to get a better idea for how to write your research paper.

Stylistic rules and conventions vary greatly across academic disciplines. Before you start writing your paper, find a few representative articles in your desired field to analyze. Ask yourself the following questions to make sure your own writing aligns with disciplinary conventions.

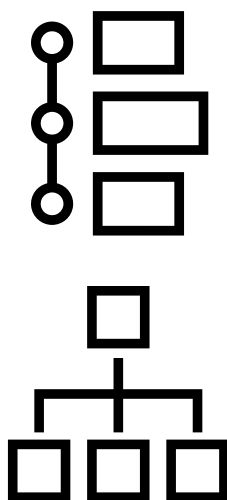**1**

Person and tense

- What tense does the author use? Past, present, or future? Does it charge in different sections of paper?

  _____

- What person does the author write in?

  _____

2

Organization

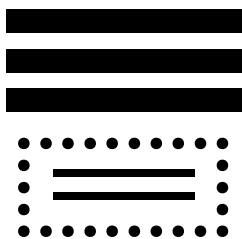- Is the paper organized thematically? Chronologically?

  _____

- Does the paper have an abstract?   Y / N

- Does the paper have a formal introduction section?
  Y / N

- Does the paper have a formal conclusion section?
  Y / N

- Does the paper use formal section headings?
  Y / N

- If not, how does the author indicate the separation between sections?
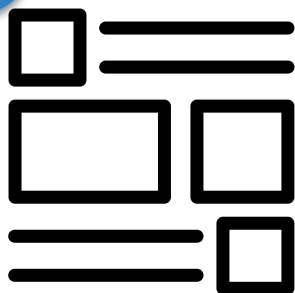
  _____

Evidence

- What types of evidence does the article use?
  _____

- How does the article incorporate this evidence? For example, does it summarize sources or use direct quotation?
  _____

- If the article uses direct quotations, are these block or single-word quotations?
  _____

Citations

- How densely populated are the citations in the paper (1-5 citations per paragraph… etc.)
  _____
  _____

- What are some commonly used verbs/language to describe sources, e.g. "observe," "argues," "suggested"… etc.
  _____
  _____

- What citation format does the author use?
  _____
  _____

What's next?

- ☐ Be sure to repeat this process with one or two more papers in the field to confirm that the profile you have gathered is representative.

- ☐ Get feedback on early drafts of your paper. Ask questions about your writing style and use of evidence.

- ☐ Come visit us at one of our many library locations or the UCLA Writing Center and get one-on-one research and writing assistance tailored to your topic and questions: library.ucla.edu/support/research-help

- ☐ For more help with your writing, check out our website: uclalibrary.github.io/research-tips