IMRAD Cheat Sheet

Abstract

Abstracts can vary in length from one paragraph to several pages, but they follow the IMRaD format and typically spend:

- 25% of their space on importance of research (Introduction)
- 25% of their space on what you did (Methods)
- 35% of their space on what you found: this is the most important part of the abstract (Results)
- 15% of their space on the implications of the research (Discussion)

Introduction & Importance (Make a case for your new research)

Begin by explaining to your readers what problem you researched and why the research is necessary. Convince readers that it is important that they continue to read.

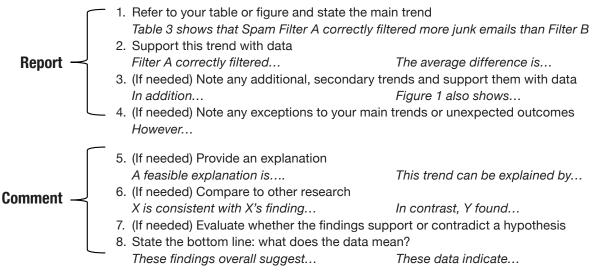
Discuss the current state of research in your field, expose a "gap" or problem in the field, and then explain why your present research is a timely and necessary solution to that gap. See Novelty Handout.

ethods (What did you do?)

Methods are usually written in past tense and passive voice with lots of headings and subheadings. This is the least-read section of an IMRaD report.

esults (What did you find?)

Results are where the findings and outcomes of the research go. When talking about this data, we can think of the results as having two parts: report and comment. The reporting function always appears in the results section while the comment function can go in the discussion section. Make sure all tables and figures are labeled and numbered separately. Captions go above tables and beneath figures. (See Example on Page 3)



Discussion (What does it mean?)
Discussion sections contain the following moves:

- 1. They summarize the main findings of the study. This allows readers to skip to the beginning of the discussion section and understand the main "news" in the report.
- 2. They connect these findings to other research
- 3. They discuss flaws in the current study.
- 4. They use these flaws as reasons to suggest additional, future research.
- 5. (If needed) They state the implications of their findings for future policy or practice.