

Try to pick a catchy title!

RULES OF THUMB FOR WRITING RESEARCH ARTICLES¹

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Abstract

The paper provides 'rules of thumb' for writing research articles (RA) and getting them published. These were discussed during the "Scientific writing course" organized for ITC PhD students by Cressie Communication Services. Important aspects of macro and sub-structure of a paper were selected through group discussions. The substructure and functions of different sections of RAs are described. Results of previous investigations and interviews among journal editors were used to summarize what makes a good RA. It was concluded that clear, logical, coherent, focused, good argument and well-structured writing gets the paper published and read. Some important rules of the thumb selected were: "Adjust your writing to the audience and purpose", "Avoid redundancy and unnecessary explanations" and "Write like you speak and then revise".

abstract should be short but give the overall idea:
what was done, what was found and what are the main conclusions

Keywords: Research article, rules of thumb, structure, publishing.

when selecting KWs, imagine you are searching for your article in some database

I. INTRODUCTION

A scientific or research article or paper is a technical (or essayistic?) document that describes a significant experimental, theoretical or observational extension of current knowledge, or advances in the practical application of known principles (O'Conner and Woodford, 1976). It is important to emphasize that a research article (further referred as RA) should report on research findings that are not only sound (valid) and previously unpublished (original), but also add some new understanding, observation, proofs, i.e. potentially important information (Gordon, 1983). Unlike a novel, newspaper article or an essay, a RA has a required structure and style, which is by international consensus known as "Introduction Methods Results and Discussion" or IMRaD. However, a RA is not only a technically rigid document, but also a subjective intellectual product that unavoidably reflects personal opinions and beliefs. Therefore, it requires good skills in both structuring and phrasing the discoveries and thoughts. These skills are acquired through experience, but can also be taught.

MOVE 1:
Introduce the topic and emphasize why is it important!

MOVE 2:
Relate to current knowledge:

Many books have been written on general guidelines and rules to help scientists write RAs (Day, 1994; Trelease, 1958). These days, many scientific societies and groups write quite detailed publications and style manuals to help both authors and publishers to get along; see for example the CBE's style manual (1994) or the ACA-CSA-SSSA's

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