

RESEARCH PAPER STRUCTURE

TASK 1: In groups, make a list of the different parts and components of a research paper in the order in which they would typically appear in a finished manuscript. There may be variations in your lists reflecting the requirements of different subject specialisms or the journal(s) you wish to submit to. It is suggested your list may include up to 14 distinct items, though some of these are often combined (e.g. *materials and methods* or *results and discussion*) and will not necessarily be present in all types of research paper. Which items on your list are part of the main body of the paper?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10
- 11
- 12
- 13
- 14

Now discuss with your classmates the order in which you would typically write the different parts and components. How similar are your approaches?

Which parts of the process do you find easiest? Which do you find most difficult? Why?

TASK 2: In groups, and based on your own experience of reading and writing research papers, draw up some essential guidelines for writing the main sections. What sort of information should be included in each? Suggestions for the Discussion section are already given.

	What information?
Title	
Abstract	
Introduction	
Method	
Results	
Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Principal findings</i>• <i>Strengths and weaknesses of the study</i>• <i>Strengths and weaknesses in relation to other studies, particularly any differences in results</i>• <i>Implications</i>• <i>Unanswered questions and future research</i>

TASK 3: LANGUAGE FUNCTIONS. In the different parts of your paper you will need to be able to use language to signal different patterns of organisation (the kind of language we use for defining, classifying, expressing degrees of certainty, comparing and contrasting etc). The paragraphs below, for example, illustrate comparison and contrast. Underline the words and phrases that signal comparison and contrast.

Paragraph A (comparing things)

Three personal computers, the Evesham Axis 1.33 SK, the Armani R850 P4 and the Mesh Elite 1.7 GT Pro, were compared with respect to the following factors: price, processor speed and size of hard disk. The Evesham Axis, which costs £1,174, is by far the cheapest of the three, the Armani and the Mesh Elite costing £2,467 and £1,938 respectively. The Evesham Axis has the same hard disk size as the Armani, 40 MB, whereas the Mesh Elite is the largest at 57 GB. Regarding the processor speed, the Armani and the Mesh Elite are similar - the processor speed, at 1.7 GHz, being 0.37 GHz faster than the Evesham Axis.

Paragraph B (comparing events and actions)

Tribes differed in their basic ways of providing for themselves. Indians of the Southwest lived in villages and planted their corn and squash in orderly rows. However, around the Great Lakes forest Indians hunted deer and small furbearing animals. On the Great Plains braves tracked the buffalo, while in the Pacific Northwest plentiful supplies of salmon and other fish tempted Indians into their canoes and kept hunger away.

Bernard Weisberger, *The impact of our past*. McGraw Hill, 1972

Paragraph C (comparing views and opinions)

In the 19th century, two widely differing schools of socialist thought emerged, the Utopian Socialists and the Marxians. The first group believed that public ownership of the means of production was a necessary goal for human happiness. However, they wanted to reach it gradually and peacefully, using democratic methods to make changes through the government. They believed in ballots, rather than bullets. They also felt that owners who had mines, factories or land taken away by the government should be paid for their property. People who have these beliefs today are called Socialists. The second group, led by Marx, also wanted the government to take over all private property used to produce goods. However, their methods were to be very different. They thought that violence or revolution would be necessary because the owners of property would fight to hold on to it. No payment should be made to these owners who lost their property. Today, those who believe in these methods are called Communists.

Edward Kolvezon, *The Afro-Asian world*. Allyn & Bacon, 1971

Above paragraphs from: www.uefap.com

The above 3 examples are from <http://www.uefap.com/writing/function/function.htm> - where you can learn a lot more about rhetorical functions by clicking on the links.

The academic phrasebank (<http://www.phrasebank.manchester.ac.uk/>) is a corpus-derived collection of useful functional language from Manchester University that will also help you with this area of language use.

REFERENCE AND PRACTICE ...

Structure of a scientific paper

- ✓ <http://unilearning.uow.edu.au/report/2b.html>

14 steps to writing a Discussion section

- ✓ <http://www.sfeddit.net/discussion.pdf>

Language functions: comparison and contrast

- ✓ <http://www.uefap.com/writing/function/function.htm>
- ✓ <http://www.phrasebank.manchester.ac.uk/>
- ✓ http://www.pearsonhighered.com/showcase/henry1e/assets/WFL_P_to_E_2e_ch09.pdf

HOMEWORK

1. **STUDY** the information and examples at <http://www.uefap.com/writing/function/function.htm> and <http://www.phrasebank.manchester.ac.uk/> on **comparison and contrast** language functions. You may also wish to study the lesson on *Comparison and Contrast Paragraphs*.
2. **WRITE** a paragraph comparing and contrasting two people, things, events, experiences or opinions/points of view. You may choose any topic you like.



Caricature from: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/France%E2%80%93United_Kingdom_relations

Don't forget ... the SEVEN STAGES of the WRITING PROCESS

<u>PLANNING</u>	<u>DRAFTING</u>	<u>REVISING</u>
1. Choose a topic	4. Write the first draft	5. Edit and revise
2. Generate ideas		6. Proofread
3. Create an outline		7. Submit