Title

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Abstract

1-2 sentences each on

* Introduction and justification
* Main goal and objectives
* Methods
* Key results & Interpretation
* Overarching conclusions

Keywords

3 to 8 keywords that are not already mentioned in the title.

Introduction

* About 1,000 words in length.
* Starts broad, and narrows down.
* Quite a few references, but the point is NOT a literature review, but rather a justification for the new research. This differs, abviously, when writing a review paper…
* Typically no sub-section headings, rarely any figures.
* Ideally, the reader should be able to write the last paragraph without having read it, i.e. your overarching goal and the research questions following from this should come easy after reading the introduction up to this point
* Only ONE goal statement in the last paragraph.
* Do not report that so-and-so studied this-and-that, but instead report findings. This is crucial, as you see many meaningless listings in papers that are not well written.
* References should be at the end of sentences, no more than 3 references per set of brackets. Make sure that each reference also really explains the findings in that sentence and avoid double or triple citations that add nothing new.
* Ideally study area comes in very late or not at all so that the questions and scope retain broad relevance. Instead, you may introduce the study area in the beginning of a “Study area and data” section or as it’s own sections (specifically when the region is of core importance). If the focus of the paper is not on methods or transferable findings, but rather regional, the region of interest can be mentioned in the introduction.
* Don’t worry about references in your early drafts, but when you work on your references, **always** use a reference manager.
* General structure of the introduction
* 1-2 paragraphs: Opener, big picture. Starting broad, leading to the main question/theme/research need.
* 1-2 paragraphs Context and justification for research question 1: state of the art but with the goal of highlighting a research gap. What is not known, which you will add to the state-of-the-art?
* 1-2 paragraphs Context and justification for research question 2
* 1-2 paragraphs Context and justification for research question 3
* Research questions: Specifically, we asked XXX research questions:

1. Research question 1, possible with objectives
2. Research question 2, , possible with objectives
3. …

* **It often makes sense to start with the research questions and objectives and structure the introduction from there.**

Methods

* About 1000 - 1500 words in length

Study area

* 1-3 paragraphs describing the study area. Our study area was… (Figure 1).
* The point here is to tell the reader only what he/she needs to know to understand the results. No need for a broad background of the natural history of your study region. Also, if e.g. the geology does not play a role for your research, don’t talk about the geology (or any other characteristic not really needed).
* FIGURES: Reference figures using Word’s cross-referencing tools! Format figure captions in the end of the writing process as captions.

Datasets used

* List all datasets and data sources that were used. Be concise! Some of the preprocessing of the datasets can go here, if it is not part of your research, but rather using the standards.
* If this is a long section, move it to the appendix and provide a summary here.

Analysis for objective/research question 1

* 1-2 paragraphs describing what you did for objective/research question 1
* Document your analyses so they can be reproduced
* The point here is to tell the reader only what he/she needs to know to understand the results. No need for a broad background.
* Make sure that you describe not just statistical methods, but also how results were summarized

Analysis for objective/research question 2

* 1-2 paragraphs describing what you did for objective/research question 2

Analysis for objective/research question 3

* 1-2 paragraphs describing what you did for objective/research question 2

Results

* About 1,000 words in length.
* Report only the results that are relevant to address the objectives and conclusions, not everything that was done.
* Report results in the order of research questions and objectives!
* Normally all figures and tables are reference to here - except for those in the methods section (study region).
* Each item should normally have one paragraph corresponding to it. Highlight the key point of each figure/ table in the text, do NOT use tons of numbers in the text.
* Put references to figures and tables at the end of the sentences, do NOT describe them (not ‘figure 1 shows…’, but rather ‘…xyz was found (figure 1)’).
* Use sub-section headings if needed.
* There are normally no references in the results section.
* Suggested structure:
  + Results objective/research question 1

1-2 paragraphs

* + Results objective/research question 2

1-2 paragraphs

* + Results objective/research question 3

1-2 paragraphs

* Do NOT DISCUSS in the results section.

Discussion

* About 1,000 words in length
* Starts with a broad, big-picture paragraph that re-iterates the main research gap and goal, the approach chosen and the main results you found. Importantly, these should include the main interpetation and how these results matter (so going beyond the results section). Goals and objectives have to match the last paragraph of the Introduction and to the Abstract.
* List main findings in the order of research questions and objectives!
* Then discuss the main findings and interpretations in that order (i.e., the order of objectives and research questions!). Start by interpreting the results you found, and then by linking this to or contrasting this to what others found (references!).
* Includes rarely any figures or tables.
* Use sub-section headings if needed, but sparingly.
* Include at least one paragraph on uncertainties, ways how the analyses can be improved, or limitations after the thematic discussion.
* End with a broad, big-picture section that links back to the wider research field and resaerch gap. Make clear how broadly applicable/relevant your results are! Highlight how your resutls have implications for policy making or planning or conservation practice.
* Normally no statements on future research needs.
* Suggested structure:
  + 1 paragraph opener: summary of the key finding and message, parallels goal from intro
  + 1-2 paragraphs Discussion related to objective/research question 1
  + 1-2 paragraphs Discussion related to objective/research question 2
  + 1-2 paragraphs Discussion related to objective/research question 3
  + 1-2 paragraphs caveats and limitations
  + 1-2 Paragraphs on conclusion and wider implications
* Depending on the journal, the conclusion may be an extra section.

Acknowledgements

* 1 paragraph: thank funding sources, folks who commented on the manuscript, folks who provided important data, technicians and field workers. Make sure you include the reviewers when you resubmit the revised manuscript.

References

* Worry about references relatively late in the game.
* Use a citation manager
* Comply with the author guidelines of the journal

Tables

* Not more than one table per page, width = 100%
* Only horizontal lines, headers and sometimes left column are in italics
* Table font same as manuscript main text
* NO tables as pictures!

Table 1: Caption, table 1

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| *Row header* | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 |

List of figures

Figure 1: Caption, figure 1

Figure 2: Caption, figure 2