

QUICK GUIDE: IMRaD REPORTS

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IMRaD refers to a paper that is structured by four main sections: Introduction, Methods, Results and Discussion. The IMRaD format is used for lab and field reports, as well as for reporting any systematic research in environmental science, marine science or geography.

TITLE	The title should be clear, succinct and accurately reflect the content of the paper.
ABSTRACT	Although the abstract comes at the beginning of the paper, you should write it after you have drafted the full report. The abstract is a short summary of the entire paper, including a sentence or two about the report's purpose and importance, a sentence or two about your methods, a few sentences that present the main findings, and a sentence or two about the implications of your findings.
INTRODUCTION	<p>The introduction explains why your study is important or necessary. Begin by describing the problem or issue that motivates the research. Next discuss the current state of knowledge in the field by reviewing the pertinent literature; then reveal the knowledge gap or problem that is the subject of your report.</p> <p>You should present aims and objectives at the end of the introduction. The aim is what you hope to achieve and is usually written in broad terms. Objectives are the specific actions you take in order to achieve the aim. When writing objectives use strong positive statements and strong verbs, using terms such as: collect, derive, construct, classify, develop, devise, measure, produce, revise, select or synthesise.</p>
METHODOLOGY	<p>If your study is field-based, or geographically focused, the first section of your methodology should concentrate on the study area. Include a location map. Describe the key patterns and processes that will later help explain your results. This section contains established knowledge about the study area, not the new data that is the focus of your report. This section is therefore informed by the literature.</p> <p>The remainder of the methods section tells readers how you conducted your study. It includes information about your methods, equipment, data and samples. It should be written in sufficient detail that a competent scientist could follow your methodology and replicate your results. Methods sections typically use subheadings (e.g. data collection, data processing), are written in past tense and use the passive voice.</p>
RESULTS	In the Results section, you present your findings. Typically, the Results section contains only the findings, not interpretations of the results. But you should describe the patterns, trends and any outliers in the results you present. Make sure all tables and figures are labelled and numbered sequentially. Captions go above tables and beneath figures.
DISCUSSION	In this section, you summarize your main findings (interpret your results), comment on those findings, and discuss agreements or disagreements with previously published work. You should also discuss limitations of your study, and use these limitations as reasons to suggest additional, future research.
REFERENCES	Use the Harvard Referencing System to cite and reference material. All references cited in the body of the paper are listed alphabetically by last name of the first author. Only references cited in the body of the paper are listed here.