

QUICK GUIDE: CRITIQUES

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WHAT IS IT	When asked to write a critique of an article for an assignment your job is to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of that article and decide if it achieved what it set out to do. By doing so, you should reflect on your own work and how you write and structure assignments. Thereby improving your own science communication.
HOW TO BEGIN	Print it. Read the article you are to critique once to get an overview. Then read it again, critically. At this point you may want to make some notes to yourself on your copy in pencil.
AUTHORS	Assess their qualifications or position or affiliation. Do they have a history in the field?
ABSTRACT	Does the abstract successfully summarize the full paper? Does it outline the purpose and importance of the study? Does it outline the methods? Does it summarize the main results, state the conclusions and broader implications of the work?
INTRODUCTION	<p>Does the introduction orientate the reader and outline the importance of the study? Is the literature review broad, yet focused on the issue? Is there historical and contemporary material included to put the study into context? Does it fairly represent opposing views? Does it reveal knowledge gaps?</p> <p>Are the aims clearly stated? Are the objectives succinct, will they lead to outcomes, and do they address the aim? If a hypothesis is presented, is it robust, testable and clearly stated?</p>
METHODOLOGY	If the study is field-based, is the study area introduced in sufficient detail to support later data analysis and interpretation? Are the methods clearly explained? Is there a clear rationale for the approach? Are the methods informed by the literature? Are the methods presented in sufficient detail to repeat the work and replicate the results? Are the methods of data collection and analysis clearly defined?
RESULTS	Are the results clearly presented and described? Are the patterns, trends and outliers described? Are all of the data taken into account? Is the data analysis rigorous? Are the results logically presented?
DISCUSSION & CONCLUSIONS	Are the results interpreted in relation to the research questions and aims? Are the conclusions supported by the results? Have the findings been discussed in relation to previously published research? Are limitations of the study and approach discussed? Are suggestions for future research included?
FIGURES AND TABLES	Are the data accurately presented? Do the figures and tables contain accurate labels and units? If maps are included, are they professionally drafted and do they contain key cartographic elements?
REFERENCES	Are all sources cited clearly and with full bibliographic details provided? Has a wide range of works in the field been referred to? Does the list contain both seminal (classic) and more contemporary literature?