

# Writing a Lab Report

**IMRaD** format is the generally accepted format for scientific writing. An IMRaD report has four main sections:

## **I**(ntroduction)

- Identify and describe the problem or question.
- Place your research question in a larger context. Why is your research question important?
- Present your hypothesis.
- Use present tense.

## **M**(ethods)

- List all materials used.
- Report the steps of your experiment in chronological order.
- Tell readers exactly what you did. Provide ample detail so the experiment can be replicated.
- Describe your methods in past tense.

## **R**(esults)

- Present your results and observations as data and facts. Objectively describe only your findings! Describe your results with details. You'll interpret your results in the next section.
- This section should be purely objective.
- Write the results in the past tense.

## **D**(iscussion)

- Summarize your results.
- Comment on the relevance/importance of your results.
- Interpret your results: Don't just tell your readers that something happened, tell them why!
- Connect your results to other research trends.
- Discuss limitations of your research.
- This section may include subjective interpretations of your results as long as those results are grounded in evidence.
- Use present tense when discussing your results.

### **General style tips:**

- **Keep it simple!** Use active sentences with a noun in the subject position performing the action of an active verb.
- **Stay positive!** Positive constructions are easier on your reader than multiple negatives.
- **It's OK to say "I" or "we".** Active voice is easier for your reader to understand.
- **Avoid "filler phrases"** that don't add meaning to your sentence.
- **Avoid acronyms and abbreviations** as much as possible.



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