

Journal articles usually have a quite rigid structure that is determined by the particular journal in which they appear and by the type of research being reported; this makes extracting information from them sometimes easier than from less rigid text types. The reporting of empirical research will mostly follow the format of abstract, introduction, methods, results, discussion, conclusion.

Function	Reading Strategies
<p>Abstracts provide a complete overview of what the research is about, what it did, how it did it, what it found and what those results mean.</p>	<p>Given the function of the abstract, you should read it first to gain a general understanding about the whole paper/research</p>
<p>Introductions usually provide a brief review of previous research, a rationale or reason for the research and an outline of exactly what it is that the research is aiming to do.</p>	<div> </div> <p>This diagram provides an outline of the sequence of information presented in the introduction. Knowledge about this structure will help you to locate relevant information and develop a clearer picture of what the research is about and why it has been done.</p>
<p>Method sections do what their titles suggest: describe the methods used in the research.</p>	
<p>Results sections also do what their titles suggest: describe the results found.</p>	<p>You will sometimes find the results and discussion sections are combined.</p>
<p>Discussion sections provide an interpretation of what the results actually mean in terms of the field and the original research question or hypothesis.</p>	<p>Read the discussion section to understand what the results mean</p>

Conclusion or General Discussion section will be present particularly in research papers where the results of several experiments have been presented and discussed. This section provides a forum for a holistic discussion of the meaning and implications of the research. It also details the implications of the research and make recommendations about further research or policy and practice in the relevant area.

Read the conclusion or general discussion section for an understanding of the key issues resulting from the research.

The journal article sections described above are visible in the example journal article below. The article has been annotated to highlight the structure and function of each section. You can use your knowledge of the structure and function of each section to improve the efficiency of your reading. Knowing where a certain type of information is located will reduce the time it takes to locate this information, as well as the time it takes you to read the article.



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Activity



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