Academic Writing in Empirical Disciplines: Typical elements of IMRD*-structured papers

Abstract: Providing a brief overview
- Summarising research: Context, research questions/hypotheses, sample and methods, results, conclusions and implications

Introduction: Creating interest in your research and provide context
- Establishing context and stating centrality of topic
- Critically reviewing relevant previous research:
  - Addressing controversies
  - Clarifying terms
- Identifying a knowledge gap
- Filling the gap:
  - Generating hypotheses or stating expectations
  - Explaining expectations (if necessary)
- Stating implications of expected outcomes

Methods: Providing enough details to allow replication of your research
- Describing sample (e.g. participants, corpus, data) and materials (e.g. measuring technique, apparatus, prompts, software)
- Describing (and justifying) the procedure: How and in which order data was collected
- Introducing the research design (e.g. variables, measurements, experimental set-up, participant assignments, survey items, codification, (novel) statistical approaches)
- Describing (and justifying) the method of analysis

Results: Presenting your results, visualising results in tables and graphs
- (Re-introducing context/aims/methods)
- Summarising results
- Referring to graphs, figures etc.
- Reporting results
- Commenting on results
  → present descriptive statistics before test statistics

Discussion: Showing how your results match your research question
- Grounding the Discussion:
  - Re-introducing general or study-specific background
  - Recounting principal findings
- Commenting on Results
  - Explicating/accounting for results
  - Clarifying expectations
  - Addressing limitations (or in separate section at the end)
  - Discussing sources of errors and statistical significance
- Referencing Literature
  - Supporting/countering with evidence (throughout the section)
- Expanding on comments
  - Generalising results
  - Stating value of study
  - Noting implications: How your results could impact practice or relate to relevant theories
  - Proposing directions

Conclusion: Summarising the most important points, stating general implications and suggesting further research

This resource condenses content by:

Note: This handout is written in British English. The references are provided in APA style (6th ed.).
*IMRD: Introduction, Methods, Results, Discussion