

The IMRAD Format: What goes where?
(IMRAD = Introduction, Methods, Research and Discussion)

Section	Purpose	Verb Tense	Elements
Abstract	Mini-version of the paper	Simple past - refers to work done	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Principal objectives ✓ Methods used ✓ Principal results ✓ Main conclusions
Introduction	Provides rationale for the study	Present — refers to established knowledge in the literature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Nature and scope of problem ✓ Review of relevant literature ✓ Your hypothesis ✓ Your approach used in this study (& justification for this approach) ✓ Principal results ✓ Main conclusions
Methods & Materials	Describes what was done -- experiment, model, or field study	Simple past - refers to work done	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Description of materials ✓ Description of procedure in a logical order, e.g., chronological order or by experiment ✓ Sufficient detail so that procedure can be reproduced
Results	Presents the data, the facts -- what you found, calculated, discovered, observed	Simple past - refers to what was found, observed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Your results ✓ Your observations during experiments/field work ✓ Your observations about the results (e.g., compare and contrast between experiments/model runs) ✓ Results of any calculations using the data, like rates or error
Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shows the relationships among the facts • Puts your results in context of previous research 	Present - emphasis on established knowledge, present results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Trends, relationships, generalizations shown by the results ✓ Any exceptions, outlying data (and WHY) ✓ How your results agree/disagree with previous studies and WHY
Conclusions	Summarizes your principal findings	Present - emphasis on what should now be accepted as established knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Conclusions should relate back to the introduction, the hypothesis ✓ Summary of evidence supporting each conclusion ✓ Implications, the significance of your results or any practical applications