# Structure of Research Papers

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What is the general structure of a research article?
Most research articles will be structured in the following way. The components may vary slightly from article to article but in general, they will contain these elements: Abstract, Keywords, Introduction, Literature Review, Methodology, Results, Discussion, Conclusion and References.

Abstract
The abstract appears at the beginning of all research papers and provides a synopsis of the article up to around 500 words. It should include a context and explanation for writing the article and describe how the study was undertaken. It should also summarise major results and include a conclusion. Journal databases usually let you view abstracts quickly and easily so that you can check that an article is appropriate before downloading it.

Keywords
Often scholarly articles will include a list of keywords which describe the main concepts being discussed. These keywords are also used as subject tags within the library’s databases and you can use these as search terms to help you find relevant material more easily.
Introduction
Research papers will begin with an introduction which outlines the purpose of the paper and why it is an important contribution to that field of study. The introduction will usually include a statement of purpose or a hypothesis.

Literature Review or Background
A literature review provides an overview of relevant studies and other works which may support or provide background information on the subject at hand. A literature review is also used to demonstrate how the study contributes to the overall body of academic knowledge in the field.

Methods or Methodology
Here the authors discuss how the study was conducted and you will be able to ascertain something about the validity and reliability of the study. It also allows other researchers to recreate the methodology for further research. Any tools such as surveys or questionnaires used in the collection of data may be noted here and included in an appendix.

Results
The results of the methods used in the study should be presented at this point in a logical and objective manner. Here, authors endeavor to establish a direct correlation between the methodology and the results in a clear and concise way. To do
this, they may include visual representations of the data such as tables and graphs.

**Discussion (including Limitations)**
The article should include a discussion of the results where the authors explain the results, discuss any problems or limitations that may have influenced the study and connect the findings back to the key points in the literature review.

**Conclusions**
The conclusion should now explain any major inferences that can be drawn from the study and outline why they are important to the relevant academic field, associated industries, or to the general population. Recommendations for future research may also be made so that other researchers can build on the body of knowledge established thus far.

**References**
Scholarly works should always include a list of references. Citing references both credits the authors of works used throughout the study and is important for avoiding plagiarism and intellectual theft. Moreover, it allows readers to easily follow-up on information and other studies used by the authors to support their findings.