



Structuring Your Work with IMRaD

IMRaD is an internationally accepted scheme used to organize and structure scientific papers. When presenting empirical research results in scientific journals, the IMRaD-scheme is the norm (cf. Magilchrist pp. 67, 68).

In an academic context, the scheme is a good basis for the outline of theoretical or practical theses, complemented by a theoretical part after or in the introduction (cf. Hirsch-Weber and Scherer pp. 68-70).

Using the IMRaD scheme for writing assignments during your studies

- The bullet points of the IMRaD acronym do not have to form separate chapters of the paper, but they should appear in a certain form and in that order. You can combine them into one chapter or divide them into several.
- The IMRaD scheme is implemented differently in different disciplines. Concrete agreements with the supervisor on the content and scope of the introduction as well as the placement of the topic of the paper are indispensable.

The typical IMRaD scheme

INTRODUCTION: Why?

- Why is this study important?
- Why are the topic and the results relevant?
- What was the aim of the study?
- What were the research question(s) and/or hypotheses?
- What research does already exist on this topic?

METHODS: How?

- What material was needed?
- What methods were used to generate and analyze the data?

RESULTS: What?

- What is the answer to the research question?
- What data were generated? Do they support the hypotheses?

and

DISCUSSION: What does this mean?

- What do the results mean?
- How can the results be interpreted?
- What conclusions can be drawn?
- To what larger field are the findings relevant?
- What implications can be derived for further research, theory, or practice?

IMRaD in practice

- The introduction part of the IMRaD scheme must be complemented by a theoretical part (basics, theoretical aspects etc.) for practical and theoretical student work.
- As a rule, the IMRaD scheme must be complemented by the section "summary and outlook" at the end of the student work.
- If the text is to be preceded by an abstract, this should also follow the structure of the IMRaD scheme. An abstract is no longer than 250-500 words. The focus of the abstract are the work's results and the discussion (cf. Wu pp.1345-1349).

Abstract: First impression for the reader

- What is the objective of the work / study?
- What is the disciplinary context of the work? Context and background of the study
- What methods were used?
- What are the main findings of the study?
- What is the work's contribution to the field?

(cf. Bitchener p. 10, 11)

Conclusion / summary and outlook

- What was the objective (e.g., restating the research question / hypotheses) and the main methodological features of the study?
- What are the main findings of the study?
- What is the contribution of the study to the state of research?
- What recommendations for further research and, if applicable, practical application(s) can be derived from the study?

(cf. *ibid.* p. 198)

Sources:

Bitchener, John. *Writing an Applied Linguistics Thesis or Dissertation. A guide to presenting empirical research*. Palgrave, 2010.

Hirsch-Weber, Andreas und Stefan Scherer. *Wissenschaftliches Schreiben und Abschlussarbeiten in Natur- und Ingenieurwissenschaften*. utb, 2016.

Magilchrist, Felicitas. *Academic Writing*. Ferdinand Schöningh, 2014.

Wu, Jianguo. *Improving the writing of research papers. IMRAD and beyond*. Landscape Ecology. 2011.

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