

# Some notes on writing papers

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1. Present the focus of your paper and your findings early in the paper. Normally, the greatest temptation is to treat your paper like a mystery novel. **DON'T DO THAT!** You aren't writing a mystery.
2. Let the reader know the results up-front, and discuss what you are going to show examples/figures/... **BEFORE**, not after, you present them in the paper.
3. Be clear and stick to a professional format. If you aren't sure, then look at the relevant journals (if you are presenting/analysing standard phonological data, then look at the journal **Phonology**, if you are presenting experimental data, then look at the **Journal of Phonetics** or the **Journal of Laboratory Phonology**).
  - (a) Make sure examples/figures/tables are in a standard format (look at journals).
  - (b) Make sure they have captions that help understand what they represent.
4. If you have experimental/count data, make sure to have plots, and make sure that they are legible with proper axes and clear text.
5. Have an *Abstract* before the Introduction, where you summarise the main focus and your findings in about 200 words.
6. Have proper sections (the minimal list is given below)
  - (a) *Introduction*, where you present the crucial topic, and your findings.
  - (b) *Background*.
  - (c) *Your Data and Analysis* (you could break this up into two or keep it as one).
  - (d) *Conclusions* (Should include a brief discussion of why others should care about your results).
7. Have section numbers (If you are using Word, it allows you to generate this. Use that if you can...it will save you a LOT of time in the future.)
8. Have proper citations (use reference software - [Zotero](#) and [Mendeley](#) are free, and have plug-ins for Word/Open Office/...).
9. Check for errors/typos.
10. Add page numbers.
11. Finally, here are some more resources you might want to see:
  - (a) [This link is good to get an idea of how to organize a paper.](#)
  - (b) [Some Dos and Don'ts](#)
  - (c) [Some more information from Bruce Hayes if you are interested.](#)