



The Key Sections Of A Published Paper

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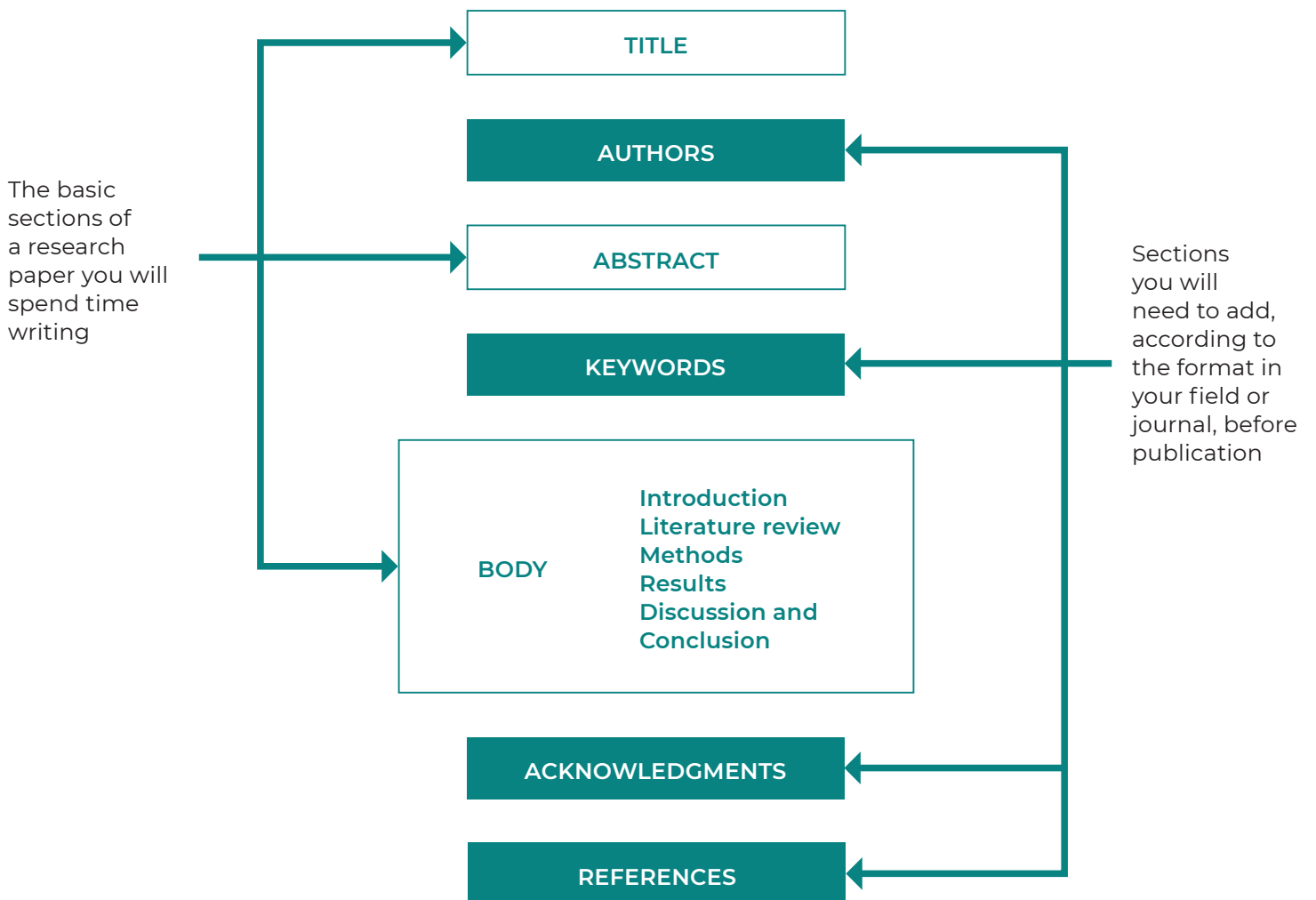
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The Parts of a Published Research Paper

During the writing process, the main parts of your manuscript you will be working on are the title, abstract, and body.

But papers published in journals usually have additional sections, such as the **authors list**, the **keywords**, **acknowledgements**, and **references**.

This overview briefly introduces all the sections you should expect to see in the published version of any academic manuscript.



The Title

A **title** should be concrete, appropriately detailed, and should capture your research question. Your title:

- Is **concrete** if it uses specific terms instead of vague, general concepts to describe the topic of your research.
- Is **appropriately detailed** if it provides enough information to identify the scope of your research.
- **Captures your research question** if it reflects the connections between the concepts, ideas, or questions in your research.

The Authors

The **authors list** acknowledges people who add to the intellectual content of a paper. As a rule of thumb, contributors qualify as **authors** if they meet all of the following criteria:

1. They **contribute substantially** to the design of the work or to the acquisition or analysis of the data.
2. They **draft the work or provide critical revisions**.
3. They **provide final approval** of the version to be published.
4. They **agree to be accountable for the work**.

The Abstract

An **abstract** should help the reader see the value of your research question, understand your methods, and take an interest in your results. They are usually **5-8 sentences** long and summarize:

- The **context** for your research
- The **research question** you seek to answer
- The **existing literature** on your research topic
- The **limitations of existing literature**
- The **research methods** you use
- The **results** you obtain
- The **conclusion** of your paper

Keywords

Keywords are terms that describe the main concepts of your paper.

They are used by search engines, academic databases, and journal websites to categorise your research, which allows your work to show up when other researchers search for the topics it covers.

To ensure your paper is correctly categorised, make sure your keywords are **specific** to your field, **concrete rather than abstract** words, and are **spelled out in full** rather than abbreviated.

The Body

The different sections the **body** of your research paper provide the full background to your work, detail its questions and methods, report its findings in depth, and discuss its implications.

In general, these sections include:

1. The **introduction**
2. The **literature review**
3. The **methods**
4. The **results**
5. The **discussion and conclusion**



Acknowledgements

The **acknowledgements** section allows you to **credit people and institutions who contributed to your work** in a significant way. It can be at the beginning or the end of a paper depending on the journal.

Journals also expect researchers to use this section to report **all sources of funding for their research**, including the specific grant or award numbers if those are available.

If your research is part of a larger project financed by a single grant, consult with the project's Principal Investigator to get this information.

The Reference List

The **reference list** is usually the last section of your paper. It brings together the works you have cited and referred to in your paper, most of which should be other published academic texts.

As you write, it helps to use **reference management software** such as [Mendeley](#) or [Zotero](#) to create in-text citations and a bibliography.

Reference managers have large in-built libraries of citation styles and can often automatically convert your references to fit a journal's specific style.



These training materials are provided as part of the Mawazo Learning Exchange, a professional development platform for African researchers. The Mawazo Learning Exchange is a programme of the Mawazo Institute, a non-profit research organisation based in Nairobi, Kenya. Mawazo's mission is to support the next generation of female thought leaders and scholars in Africa, and get policymakers and the public engaged with their research.



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