

# Writer's Workshop

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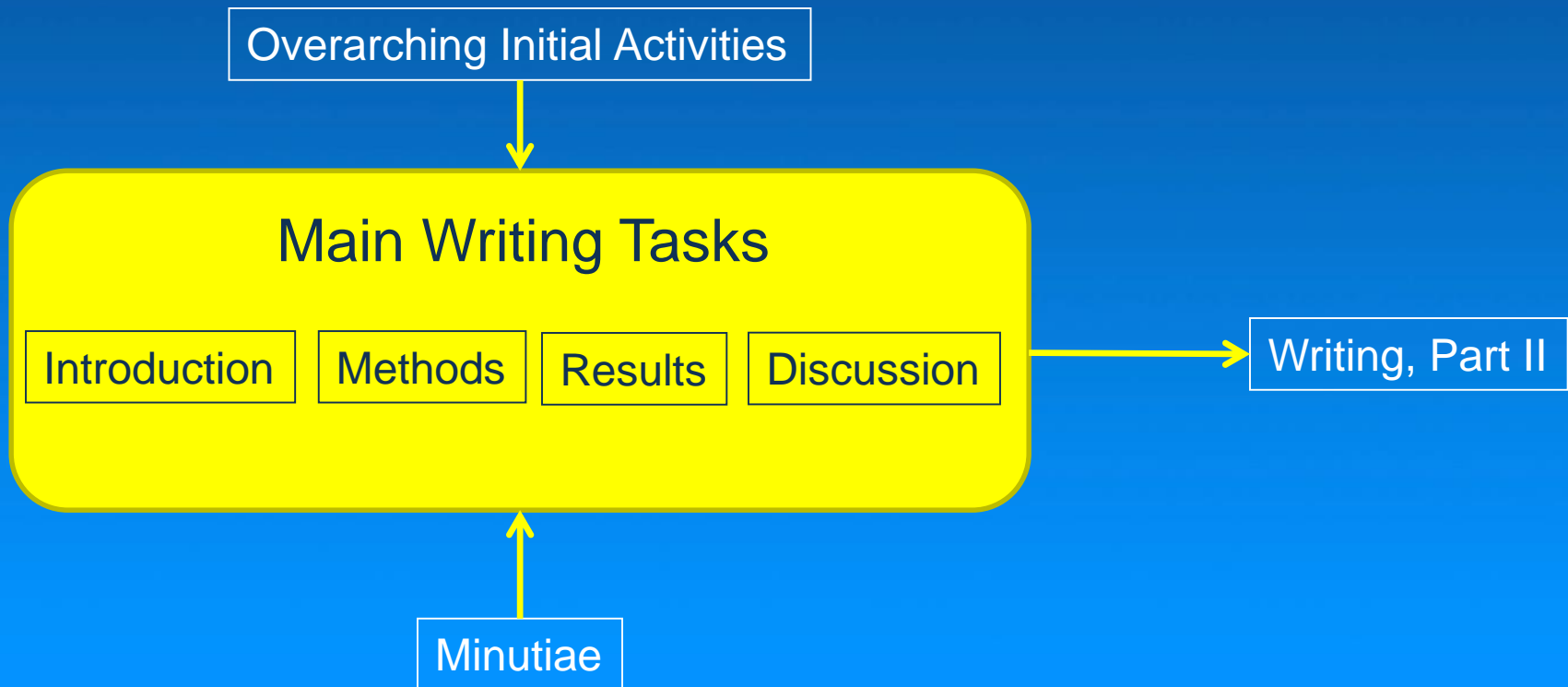
# Agenda

1. Deconstructing the Journal Article

2. Strategies for Effective Writing

# Part 1: The Journal Article

# Many Parts Make Up the Whole



# Overarching Initial Activities

Complete this sentence:

“The purpose of this article is to . . . .”

Be Clear about the Following:

- What is the story you want to tell?
- What’s the audience you want to reach?
- (what’s the urgency?)



Once you have picked a journal:

- Identify template articles, if possible (and read)
- Get (and read) author’s instructions
- Contact editor (or not)

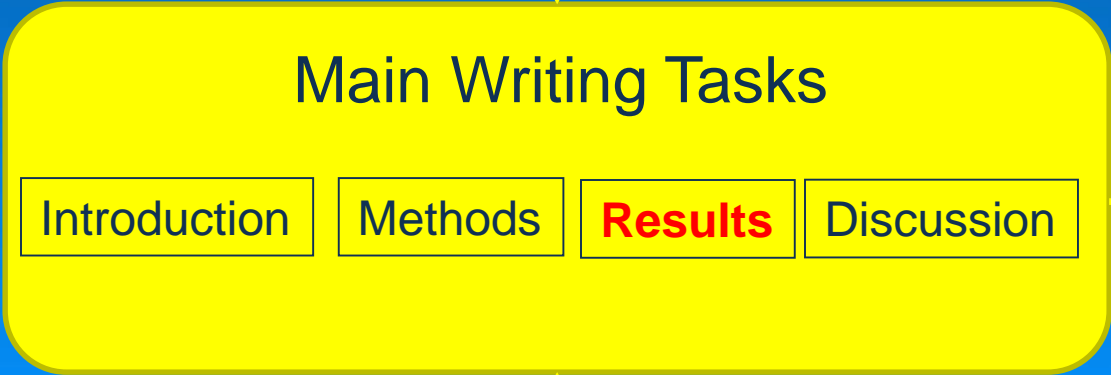
If this is not a solo performance, complete these sentences:

“The authors of this article are . . . .”

“Author A will do X by (date) . . . .”

“The order of authors will be . . . .”

Overarching Initial Activities



Writing, Part II

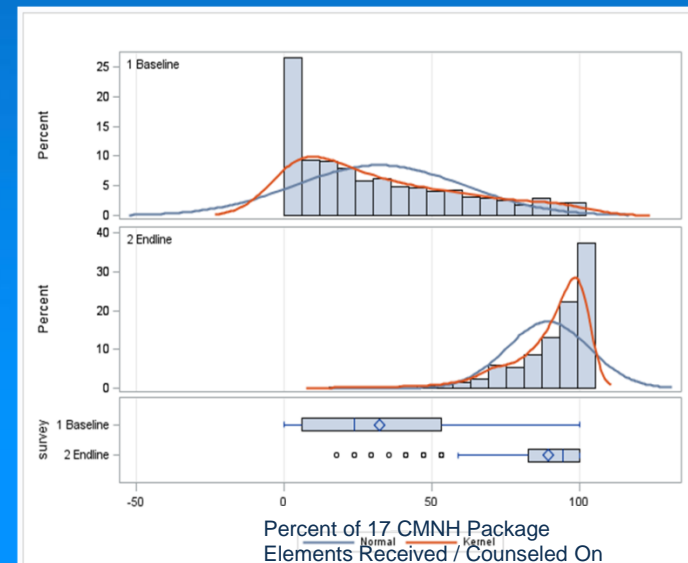
Minutiae



# Main Writing Tasks: Start with Results

This is the “What” of the story you are telling

- Tables and Figures (I start here; they’re worth their weight in words)
  - ✓ Descriptive
  - ✓ Analytic
- Narrative
  - ✓ Who & When?
  - ✓ Main Findings (aim by aim)



# Results: Points to Keep in Mind

## Quantitative Studies

- Descriptive materials
- Univariate analyses
- Multivariate analyses
- Qualitative Studies
- Descriptive materials
- Theme-by-theme explication
- ✓ With textual examples  
(avoid falling in love)

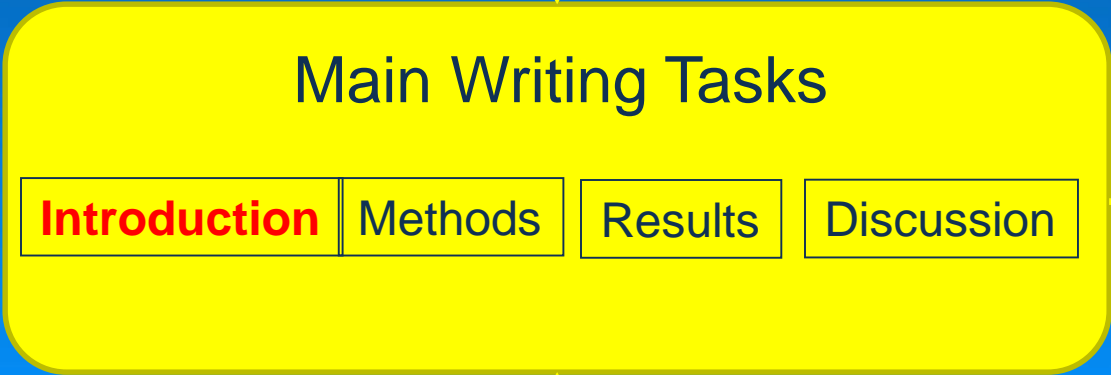
## Mixed Methods Studies

- Varies by **Quant-Qual** or **Qual-Quant**
- Present dominant model first
- For each, present descriptive
- Then either analyses or themes
- Triangulate

**Avoid Table-Text Redundancy**



Overarching Initial Activities



Writing, Part II

Minutiae



# Introduction: Introduce the Results

**Name the Universe**

**Identify the Known**

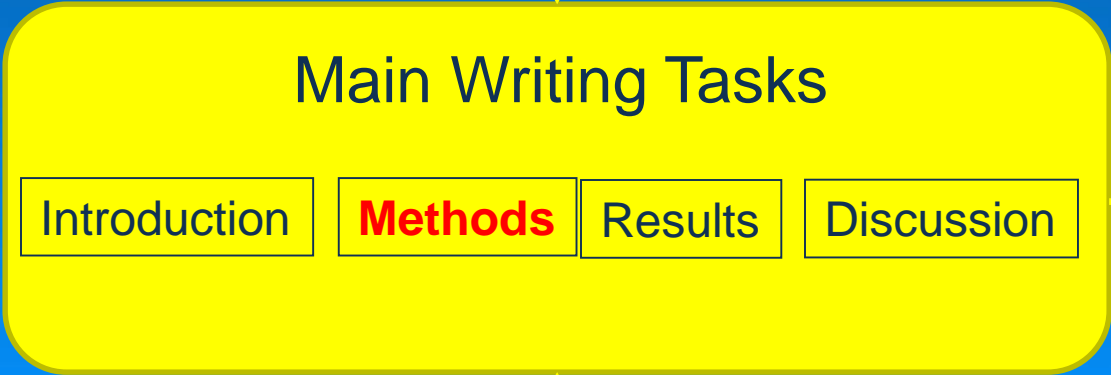
**Identify the Unknown**

Generally,  
just a few  
paragraphs

**State the Purpose**

Purpose  
matches  
findings

Overarching Initial Activities



Writing, Part II

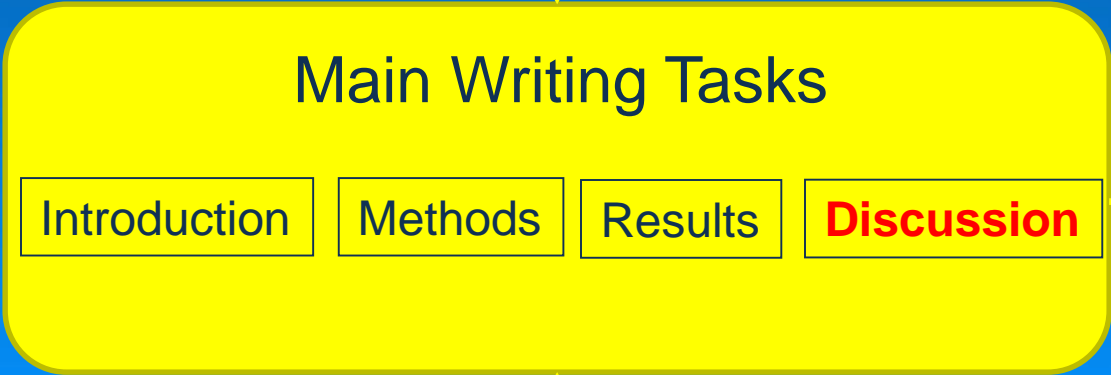
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# Methods: Crossing “t’s”; Dotting “l’s”

- Design
- Conceptual/Theoretical Framework [Figure or Diagram]\*
- Sample/Recruitment
- Ethical Considerations
- Setting
- Procedures
- ✓ Intervention(s)
- ✓ Data-gathering
- Time frame
- Measures
- Analytic methods/statistical procedures
- Steps to assure reliability/trustworthiness

Overarching Initial Activities



Writing, Part II

Minutiae



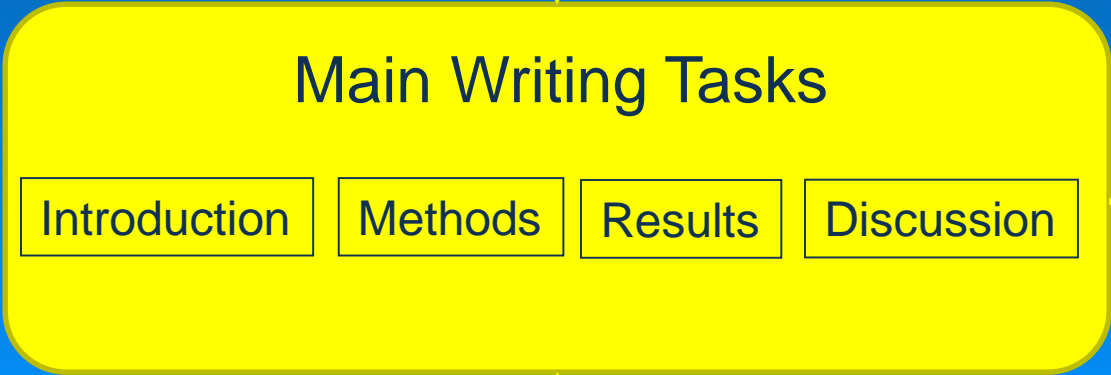
# Discussion: What it all Means

- Summarize Main Findings
  - ✓ Found what you expected
  - ✓ Found something unexpected
  - ✓ Didn't find what you expected
- Place of the Findings in the Field
  - ✓ What you've strengthened or confirmed
  - ✓ What you're contradicting or challenging
- Where this leaves things
  - ✓ Next steps; additional research; directions
- Strengths and Limitations

# Additional Sections – Journal-Dependent

- Summary or Conclusion
- Clinical Implications
- Implications for Nursing
- Objectives

Overarching Initial Activities



Main Writing Tasks

Introduction

Methods

Results

Discussion



Writing, Part II

**The Small Stuff**





# Minutiae – The Rest of the News

- Title
- Authors' information
- Abstract (format and limits)
- Citations (appropriately formatted)
- Acknowledgements (noting funding source)
- Submission format and method
- Cover letter, as appropriate

# Revise and Resubmit

The letter that starts “We cannot accept the current version, but invite revisions . . .” is GOOD NEWS

- Map out critiques and responses
  - ✓ parcel out, with clear timeframes
- Prepare revised text
- Prepare resubmission letter (follow directions)
- Meet specified deadline

# Final Steps

## After Positive Publication Decision

- **Publisher's forms (all authors)**
- **Review copy proofs (short timeframe)**

# Rejection

- Get out the second envelope
- Reboot

# Strategies for Effective Writing

1. Strategies for writing journal articles

2. Quirks and idiosyncrasies

3. Writing team management issues

# A Non-Linear, Asynchronous Approach to Writing a Journal Article

- Start with what you actually have:
  - What results do you have?
  - Work the data
- Draft a purpose statement (“The purpose of this article is . . . .”)
- Work back and forth: refine the analyses and the purpose statement
- Rework the data, as needed
- Memo yourself: notes on meanings and interesting points – ideas for another article or study
- Review what the field has said; refine the purpose and re-work the data, as needed
- Use outlines throughout the process

# A Non-Linear Approach to Writing, Continued

- Write the Introduction only when the story is clear
- When enough IMRD pieces are done, set them in order and see what you've got:
  - ✓ What's missing? (add)
  - ✓ What's extraneous? (it's not your first-born; sacrifice it)
- Again: set the pieces in order.
- Edit – for clarity, concision, completeness and word count

# Quirks and Idiosyncrasies



# Quirks and Idiosyncrasies

- Do what makes sense – what works for you.
- Make the time
- Make writing appointments with yourself; schedule writing times
  - Write at optimal times
  - Write opportunistically
  - Stop before the wall
  - Manage as many writing projects as are comfortable
- Be Strategic
  - Have “A,” “B,” and “C” lists of writing tasks or

# Make the Time

- Shut your office door
- Set and keep office hours
- Find teaching shortcuts
- Only slightly update last years slides and/or readings
- Recycle exercises, PBLs, lectures, talks

## But Do Not

- Sacrifice the balance in your life

# Breaking Writing into Component Parts

## “A” List Writing Tasks (> 1 hour)

- First 2-3 ¶ of Intro
- Results Narrative
- Discussion Summary
- Fit with the Field  
Discussion
- References
- Editing
- Revisions

## “B” List Writing Tasks (30-45 minutes)

- Purpose Statement
- Methods Sections
- Strengths
- Limitations
- Abstract
- Tables & Figures
- Revision cover letter

## “C” List Writing Tasks (<15 Minutes)

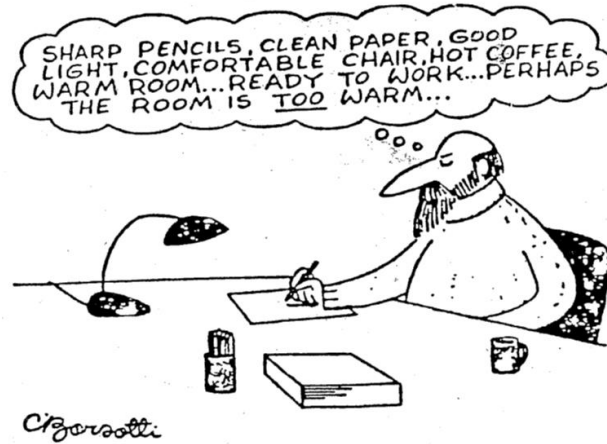
- Section Outlines
- Authors’ bios
- Acknowledgements
- Cover Letter
- Teaching Points
- Objectives
- Quiz

Make your own lists and create  
your own process maps  
to fit your temperament

# Quirks and Idiosyncrasies

- Set intermediate and final deadlines
- Have a scorecard and keep track
- Use the tools you like (pencils, stickies, ink pen, iPad, yellow legal pad, 3 x 5s, white board, black board, sketch pad, desktop, quill)
- Write in the place you like
- Order your [desk, room, décor, lighting, ambient music, lap dog] in whatever ways allow you to invoke your writing muse

Sometimes  
the muse  
can be too  
fussy.



Write, already.

Eliminate  
Distractions.

Optimize  
Conditions.

But, please . . .

## BLOCK ISLAND



### In the Event of Writer's Block:

- Pick any small task From the list
- Do it!
- Repeat
- Get over it

# A Writing Team

A. A marvelous writing strategy?

B. A boon for productivity?

C. A guarantee of conflict?

D. A sure way to lose friends?

# Make a Contract Up Front

- Roles (who is good at what?)
- Responsibilities (write; compute; design; edit; compile; submit; corresponding author)
- Timelines
- Consequences (warnings; performance improvement plan; graceful withdrawal/termination)
- Conflict Resolution Strategies (who decides; who adjudicates)