

Checklist for taking bite-sized, manageable pieces out of a manuscript

Created by Knutie: 29 Jan 2019

NOTE: I posted this checklist to Twitter and there is a nice discussion about the methods that other people use: <https://twitter.com/SarahKnutie/status/1084484089833578497>

1. Add line/page numbers, headers for each section, authors/affiliations, working title, acknowledgements, and reference cited section. Start thinking about and discuss which journal(s) you will be submitting the manuscript to first with advisor (or co-authors). Name file "LASTNAME_MANUSCRIPTKEYWORD_TODAYSDATE.docx". For example, my current manuscript is: "Knutie_Itasca2017Resources_12Jan19.docx". *Every time you update the manuscript, change the date so that you have copies of the old files.*

2. Write the last paragraph of the introduction, which includes the goals/objectives/hypotheses/predictions. *This step is important to determine which methods/results to include.*

NOTE: If you are still learning how to write a manuscript, I'd recommend working with your advisor on each of these steps as you go.

3. Outline methods.

4. Write out methods.

5. Re-read and revise intro paragraph/methods.

6. Outline the tests that you will be performing with specific analyses in the results section.

7. Perform stats & copy code and output into word document, this will help while writing out the results. Add figures for each test to visualize the results. *Other people use different programs for this step (see Twitter discussion).*

8. Write results and decide on which figures/tables to include.

9. Re-read and revise the results. Decide on journal for submission.

10. Write very roughly outline introduction.

11. Re-read the published literature (& find new papers) and outline the main results for each paper. Decide on which citations to include and add them to the outline. *This step also might inspire more analyses.*

12. Add text to outline of intro.

13. Outline and write the first paragraph of the discussion. Roughly outline the rest of the discussion.

14. At this point I usually go back and forth between writing out the introduction and discussion based on my motivation for that day.

15. Finish introduction.
16. Re-read introduction.
17. Finish discussion.
18. Re-read discussion.
19. Outline the abstract then write it out.
20. Read the full manuscript.
21. Read the full manuscript.
22. Have someone else (or coauthors) read the manuscript. Again, if you're a student or post-doc, you'd be exchanging drafts throughout the process.
23. Read the full manuscript.
24. Double check citation format.
25. Upload data to open access data management website (e.g. Figshare or Dryad)
26. Submit. Do not be a perfectionist.