

Master's thesis outline

What is the structure of the paper?

- Introduction (why did we start?)
- Methods (what did we do?)
- Results (what did we find?)
- Discussion (what does it mean?)

In what order should I write?

1. Methods and results
2. Discussion
3. Introduction
4. at the very end the abstract

“Often journal editors will only read your title, abstract and cover letter; and then decide based on that if they reject the paper immediately, or if they read it in more detail and send it out for peer review.”

How long?

Styling

Usually good number of paragraphs is 2-7-7-6:

- Intro: about 2 or 3
- Methods: 7
- Results: 7
- Discussion: 6 (but better to look at your target journal)

“Such a strict style helps the reader to quickly find the relevant info he/she is interested in (and is often needed to get published).”

Word count

Many journals allow for 3000-3500 words and 5 tables or/and figures.

These 5 tables/figures should reflect the essence of your overall message.

Need 6000 words total for the thesis to count, so an extra 2500-3000 words will be needed to complement the paper. This is easily done with the annex on data imputation and the other methods annex (clustering, effective contact rate calculation, etc..)

NOTES:

Every journal has (mostly different...) author guidelines: stick to this format! Formats are usually similar; but often reference styles/ style of abstract etc differs between journals.

If you absolutely need to write/show more than what the journal allows, the journals usually allow for an appendix. But be aware that people rarely read the appendix, and all the important info (including a detailed methodology of everything you included in the results section) must be included in the main paper.