# Biology Writing Tips

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>AUDIENCE</strong></th>
<th>● Professors and peers with equivalent basic scientific skills and knowledge but without a detailed understanding of specific topic</th>
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| **PURPOSE**  | ● To communicate data and the meaning of that data in a clear, concise fashion  
|              | ● To convince of scientific importance  |
| **TONE/VOICE** | ● Professional  
|               | ● No slang or abbreviations  
|               | ● Passive, past tense  
|               | ● 3rd person  
|               | ● Give specific scientific names  |
| **STRUCTURE** | ● Linear, direct, no “whimsy”  
|               | ● Walk through logic of the steps taken in the research  
|               | ● Follows general lab report format:  
|               |   ○ Introduction: provides background information and research question at the end of the paragraph  
|               |   ○ Materials and methods: provides detail about process so that work could be repeated  
|               |   ○ Results: presents key trends found in data; tables and figures may also be used  
|               |   ○ Discussion: evaluates data in the context of other studies and limitations of the research  
|               |   ■ Does not repeat results  |
| **RESEARCH/SOURCES** | ● Two types of sources:  
|               |   ○ Experimental data  
|               |   ○ Previous research from primary literature, not websites  |
| **SOURCE INTEGRATION** | ● No direct quotations  
|               | ● Paraphrase and cite  |
| **CITATION/STYLE** | ● Most classes use a form of Harvard style, but no department-wide standard at SMC  
|               | ● No standard between professors, but each professor will give specific instructions  
|               | ● Always typed  
|               | ● **For specifics, ask Professor!**  |