General Points

- Lab reports and primary research articles are ways of communicating details about data, including collection, analysis, results and implications.

- The three-prong challenge of writing about data:
  1. Express concepts in the most precise way possible
  2. Use appropriate terminology
  3. Use the fewest words and the clearest possible structure for sentences and paragraphs.

These materials were created for educational purposes by the course instructor, Professor Tenley Conway.
Keep in mind…..

- Methods, results, and discussion sections each have their own purpose; there should be little overlap in content.

- Use different verb tenses and active and passive voices in different sections.

- Write clear topic sentences for paragraphs.

- Place "old" information at the beginnings of sentences.

- Use "signal" words as needed.

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Reminder: Active vs Passive Voice

Example 1:

- Active Voice: The dog bit the boy.
- Passive Voice: The boy was bitten by the dog.

Example 2:

- Active Voice: Surgeons successfully performed a new experimental operation
- Passive Voice: A new experimental operation was performed successfully

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Reminder: Past Tense vs Present Tense

**Active Voice**

Present tense:
- The company ships the computers to many foreign countries.

Past tense:
- The company shipped the computers to many foreign countries.

**Passive voice**

Present tense:
- Computers are shipped to many foreign countries.

Past tense:
- Computers were shipped to many foreign countries.
Methods

- The general type of study is identified
- Details about the data, including how it was collected are presented
- Details about the analysis are described in the order they were conducted.

- Enough detail should be present to allow repetition of the data collection and analysis.
- Past tense is used here (you have already collected and analyzed the data); passive voice is ok.
Results

- Both major and minor relevant findings are presented; present major findings first
- Highlights of any data presented in tables and figures should be clearly summarized for the reader in order to show its significance

- This section is of key importance, yet it is often the shortest. That’s OK.
- Present tense and past tense verbs are used here, as well as active voice wherever possible.
Discussion

➢ Discuss what conclusions may be drawn from the patterns in the results?
➢ Discuss the degree to which these findings may be generalized. Will they always hold true in other places, for other people? If not, when might they be true/similar?

➢ To convince the reader that the interpretations of the results are correct
➢ Result findings may be referred to, but not repeated in detail
➢ Present tense and an active voice should be used