

How to Restructure Your Manuscript Worksheet

www.indeliblevoice.com

© 2023 Indelible Voice

1. **Watch the “How to Restructure an Academic Manuscript” explainer in [the Academic Writing Club](#) section of Indelible Voice.** In this worksheet we’ll work through the five steps it presents, so you’ll need a manuscript draft that you’re looking to reorganize. This exercise works best with shorter writing formats, such as a journal article, conference paper, or class paper.

2. **Start by developing a new idea.**

- What is the new “promise” or central argument of the piece? (See: “Argument Clinic” explainer if you don’t know if you have one yet)

- Who is the audience for this piece of writing?

- Which publisher are you targeting? What are their publishing requirements?

- What “ingredients” can you reuse from the old draft?

3. **Expand your argument from step #2 into a 250-word abstract**, which is a brief summary of a piece of writing that typically appears at the start of a journal article. The abstract should account for the new audience, publisher, and ingredients you’re reusing. Write it below or in a digital document. (Feel free to write 2–3 different versions of a new abstract and select the one you feel strongest about, or go back to step #2 if you aren’t satisfied with it)

4. **Write a new outline for your target publication.** The outline can be written with simple bullet points, each of which summarizes how the argument unfolds in a paragraph or double-spaced page (250 words) of written text.
 - Although submission formats differ, an empirical journal article tends to have sections for the abstract, introduction, literature review (sometimes called “related work”), methods, results, discussion, and conclusion.
 - If you’re unsure of the format for your target publication, check the submission requirements and recently published articles on the target publication’s website.

5. **Write the new introduction for your manuscript.** The introduction should help the reader grasp your argument’s general importance, value to your field, and how the rest of the manuscript will proceed. (See the explainer video on “Finding the ‘Research Gap’: The CARS approach to scientific writing” in [the “Writing Club” section of indeliblevoice.com](https://www.indeliblevoice.com))

6. **Finally, fill in the rest of the outline** with complete sentences and paragraphs. Bring in writing from your old draft or add new writing as necessary, but try not to simply reproduce the old draft’s argument. For example, you may find that you have to add 500 words of literature review to present a new mid-level concept, or entirely rewrite your conclusions for a new audience.

Good luck! And if you would like editorial assistance to ensure your argument is strong throughout your book, please review the current writing coaching services I offer at www.indeliblevoice.com/services/coaching.