THE CERIC METHOD

Read research with confidence

Every research article argues for new knowledge. Hunt these five elements and you've understood the paper.

C E R I C

READ ACROSS TIME

C **Past** — why the study was needed

E R C **Present** — the argument

I **Future** — what comes next

cericmethod.com

The CERIC Method by Genevive Bjorn · CC BY 4.0
Bjorn & Burgasser, Cambridge University Press

The five elements of every research argument — what to hunt, and where

C Claim

PRESENT

The new knowledge asserted — a clear, declarative answer to a research question.

Cue words: *we found · we report · we discovered*

Ask: **What is this paper actually claiming?**

Hunt in: Title · Abstract · Results · Discussion

E Evidence

PRESENT

The support for the claim — data, measurements, observations, models, computations.

Cue words: *we collected · surveyed · measured · modeled*

Ask: **Does the evidence really point to the claim?**

Hunt in: Abstract · Results · Figures & Tables

R Reasoning

PRESENT

The logic connecting evidence to claim — analysis, statistics, theory, prior research.

Cue words: *shows · indicates · confirms · explains*

Ask: **Does the logic hold — or does it leap?**

Hunt in: Results · Discussion (near the evidence)

I Implications

FUTURE

Why the result matters beyond this study — and where the research goes next.

Cue words: *suggests · implies · future work*

Ask: **So what — and what now?**

Hunt in: Discussion · Abstract

C Context

PAST

The past work and the gap in knowledge that motivated this study.

Cue words: *prior research found · little is known*

Ask: **Why was this study needed at all?**

Hunt in: Introduction · Abstract

WHERE TO HUNT

- Title — C
- Abstract — C C E R I
- Introduction — C C
- Methods — E R
- Results + Figures — C E R
- Discussion — C R I