The CERIC Method · Cheat Sheet

How to critically read scientific literature with confidence — five elements to hunt in every research article. · cericmethod.com

C E R I C

CONTEXT
the past — what led here

→

THE ARGUMENT · this article

EVIDENCE
grounds

→

REASONING
links

→

CLAIM
new knowledge

→

IMPLICATIONS
the future — what's next

C — Claim

PRESENT

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

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

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

E — Evidence

PRESENT

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

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

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

R — Reasoning

PRESENT

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

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

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

I — Implications

FUTURE

Ask: **So what — and what now?**

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

Cue words: *suggests · implies · future work*

C — Context

PAST

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

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

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

WHERE TO HUNT (IMRAD → CERIC)

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

Only a well-written abstract contains all five. Missing elements? Hunt the section shown here.

SAY IT WITH A SENTENCE STARTER

- C — *"This paper's central claim is ___."*
- E — *"The evidence that points to the claim is ___."*
- R — *"The reasoning is / is not robust because it does / does not connect ___ with ___."*
- I — *"These findings indicate future work is ___."*
- C — *"The rationale for the study was ___."*

While reading, keep asking: **is this sentence about the past, the present, or the future?**

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From How to Critically Read the Scientific Research Literature (Bjorn & Burgasser, Cambridge University Press)