Questions to Keep in Mind When Reading Article Sections

Introduction – Explains the purpose of the research and summarizes/comments on previous research

- What is the hypothesis of the paper?
- What is the overall purpose of the research?
- How is the current study different from previous research?
- How does the research fit into the context of its field? For example, is it attempting to settle a controversy? show the validity of a new technique? open up a new field of inquiry?
- How will the hypothesis be tested?
- Do you agree with the author’s rationale for studying the question in this way?

Methods – Tells you what equipment and materials were used and explains step by step the experiment conducted.

- What materials and equipment were used?
- What was actually measured?
- Were the measurements appropriate for the questions the researcher was asking?
- Were the measures in this research clearly related to the variables in which the researchers were interested?

Results – Explains what was observed during the experiment/study. This is where the data collected is found.

- Take time to review figures and tables. What is being shown in the figure/table?
- Were enough of the data presented so that you feel you can judge for yourself how the experiment turned out?
- Did you see patterns or trends in the data that the author did not mention? Were there problems that were not addressed?
- What is the one major finding?

Discussion – Contains the conclusions that the author would like to draw from the data. The interpretation of the data occurs here.

- Do you agree with the conclusions drawn from the data?
- Are these conclusions over-generalized or appropriately careful?
- Are there other factors that could have influenced, or accounted for, the results?
- Were the study difficulties and challenges addressed? If so what where they?

Other Questions to Consider –

- Have the authors published many articles related to the article topic? Do they appear to be experts in the field?
- Is there a funding/support statement? If there is, who has supported the research? Do you think the supporter could have biased the study results?