

HOW TO READ A RESEARCH PAPER

First, begin with reading the title, abstract and introduction of the paper in hand. See when it was published; recent research is of vital importance. Note any headings and key terms. And skip to the conclusions. Skim through the references as well to get an idea of other related works. This is to get the essence of the concepts the author/s have worked on. Doing so will help you understand if this is the right paper for you and if you want to dive into the details.

Then, read with greater discretion, paying attention to the diagrams, figures, and such. Move on to the methods and results. To know more about the background of the paper, go over unread references. This helps to discover what has or has not previously worked. Take notes of special points and add comments. Expect to encounter new mechanisms and peculiar terminology. You can always pass severely detailed work and return later. This will allow you to summarise the paper more or less. Many even consider ditching the paper at this point and moving on to another.

Now, ponder upon the work. Deeply. Look over the notes you took. Can the study be repeated? What has it been trying to find? Were the findings well-supported by evidence? How big was the sample size? Are there any factors in play? What are the limitations of the experiments? And so on.



Predatory publications and why they are bad

With the pressure of “publish or perish” in academia, students and researchers often fall into the clutches of predatory journals and conferences.

Predatory publishing is a form of exploitation. It is an academic publishing business model where authors can publish their papers for a certain fee without having their articles checked for quality and legitimacy. In most cases, predatory publications will publish your work with minimum or zero peer-review or editing services.

High-quality journals or conferences take longer to publish your papers. That is because they have to go through a long and extensive peer review as well as editing process in these publications. This is done to ensure quality research and make sure that authors are being credited for their work, and not just because they paid a hefty fee.

Despite the clear red flags of predatory publications, many researchers and research enthusiasts, mostly students, keep sending papers to these predatory publishers. As far as they are concerned, their work is being recognised and published in “international” journals and conferences, whereas the reality could not be more different.

Predatory publications are somewhat fuelled by the scientific community itself. For job-holding researchers, having a certain number of published articles is necessary for career growth. As for students, having their works published in journals puts them in an advantageous position when seeking higher education.

However, such publications rarely do any good. In fact, at times, they do more harm than good. The main motive of the organisers who host predatory conferences and publish illegitimate journals, at the end of the day, is the financial profit which comes from submission fees paid by authors.

Getting a paper published is important. However, one should also focus on staying clear of predatory journals and conferences. No matter how much effort you put into it or how ground-breaking it might be, the moment it is presented in a predatory journal or conference, its credibility plummets.



PREDATORY JOURNAL ALERT