Checklist for Writing the Methods

Writing the methods should not be too difficult providing you have kept detailed and accurate notes in your lab book.

- Write your methods section by following the stages and ensuring your information addresses the questions for each stage.
- Adapt the stages and the questions to the experiment you are carrying out.

1. Overview materials and methods (optional)

   Do you need to report this stage for your experiment? ☐
   What materials were used? ☐
   What known procedure was followed? ☐

2. Sampling and sample preparation

   How were samples taken from subjects? ☐
   How were samples handled and prepared for the experimental testing? ☐
   How were samples replicated? ☐
   What masses, volumes, incubation times and concentrations were used? ☐

3. Experimental procedure (s) i.e. sample testing

   What hypotheses/questions were being tested? ☐
   What procedures were used? ☐
   How were data collected? ☐
   How were controls, treatments, or variables measured? ☐
   How were data analysed? ☐

Read over your draft methods and check:

Are you using past tense and passive voice? ☐

Are you using scientific language and technical terms correctly? ☐
Are you describing your methods in appropriate detail? ☐

Have you had another person read your writing and give you feedback? ☐

Recommended texts and sites for terminology and nomenclature


   Instructions for Authors. (Available: http://ijs.sgmjournals.org/misc/ifora.shtml#06m)


Society for General Microbiology (2007). ‘Instructions for Authors’.
   (Available: http://mic.sgmjournals.org/misc/subonline.shtml)