

Short Communication

Prioritizing impact: The inverted pyramid as a blueprint for research communication

Lalit Gupta^{1,2} , Devang Bharti^{2*} 

¹Dept. of Medical Education, Maulana Azad Medical College and Associated Hospital, New Delhi, India

²Dept. of Anaesthesiology & Intensive Care, Maulana Azad Medical College & Associated Hospitals, New Delhi, India

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In the ever-evolving landscape of academic and professional research, effectively communicating research findings is often as important as the research itself. With an overwhelming volume of published work and an audience with decreasing attention span, researchers are confronted with the exigency of making their results stand out. The inverted pyramid architecture, borrowed from the field of journalism, offers an effective solution to this challenge by presenting research communication in an impactful manner. This communication focuses on “*how the inverted pyramid model can revolutionize research dissemination, ensuring clarity and accessibility while enhancing visibility in an overcrowded field*”.

1. The Inverted Pyramid: A Framework for Success

The inverted pyramid is a writing style that places the main message at the beginning, and the background with supporting data towards the end.¹ This approach makes the key points clear in the beginning itself, allowing readers to grasp the important information even if they do not read the entire article. For researchers, adopting this approach can help them present their work in simple, attractive statements, impacting a larger audience.

This structure typically begins with the most critical findings, followed by the context, evidence, and detailed methodology at the end.²

2. Why the Inverted Pyramid Matters in Research

1. **Capturing attention quickly:** In today’s era of information overload, researchers have to work hard to capture the attention of their audience. Researchers who begin their papers with the most important findings can immediately capture the audience’s attention, increasing the likelihood that their work will be read, cited, and applied. *For instance, papers with clear, upfront abstracts receive 30% more citations.*³
2. **Enhancing clarity and accessibility:** The inverted pyramid helps researchers distill their findings into clear, concise statements, making their work more accessible. It offers the novice information they need without requiring detailed knowledge of the methodologies, while still providing experts with the necessary details required to understand the importance of the research.
3. **Facilitating decision-making:** Policymakers and healthcare leaders depend on research findings to make decision protocols. Effective decisions emerge from the inverted pyramid model because it highlights critical and actionable insights immediately for quick and well-informed decision-making. *For example, a clinical trial demonstrating a 40% reduction in postoperative infections using AI-guided sterilization protocols would be immediately impactful- if announced potentially saving healthcare systems \$2 billion annually.* This approach mirrors the way headlines are crafted, by answering the reader’s

*Corresponding author: Devang Bharti
Email: dr.devangbharti@gmail.com

implicit question, “*Why should I care?*” The model aligns well with Creswell and Creswell’s emphasis on clarity in research communication.⁴

4. **Improving dissemination across platforms:** The inverted pyramid style works well with different communication channels, including academic and conference formats, and social media platforms. By adopting such an approach researchers achieve both, platform consistency and enhanced publicity, of their research findings.⁵

3. Impact of Inverted Pyramid on Research Visibility

The inverted pyramid model is valuable for presenting the most actionable insights upfront, ensuring timely feedback and the informed decision-making. A 2023 study estimates that more than 5 million scientific articles published every year, yet only a handful gain significant traction.⁶ This saturation creates a paradox: “*ground-breaking discoveries risk being swamped by enormous noise from subpar or duplicative research*”. Traditional research writing, which habitually hides most significant findings deep inside the detailed methodology or lengthy literature reviews, exacerbates this issue. The inverted pyramid addresses this challenge by prioritizing clarity and impact.

The concept of inverted pyramid is not limited to print media but can be effectively used in more advanced forms for research communication. By structuring their work for maximum impact across journals, conferences, and social media platform, researchers can ensure that their research findings reach and influence key stakeholders. In a world where visibility is paramount, mastering this approach is not just an advantage, but a necessity.

For instance, consider the 2021 landmark IPCC report on climate change.⁷ Instead of starting with decades of temperature data, the summary began with a powerful statement: “*Human activity has unequivocally caused global warming, with irreversible impacts already underway.*” Similarly, a researcher may start a presentation with a slide depicting global temperature rise since 1950, or one might use the hashtag **#ClimateAction** and share a video highlighting the key conclusions, on social media each of these ways conveys the same core message but tailors it to the medium, maximizing media attention and public engagement.

4. Applying the Inverted Pyramid to Research Communication

1. **Start with the Headline- The “Key Findings ”:** The most essential findings should appear first in your opening statement or introduction. Begin your presentation or paper with a concise, engaging summary of key findings that spark curiosity and engage the audience. Avoid jargon and focus on the practical implications of your findings (**Figure 1**). For instance, “A novel solar panel design produced 30%

lower carbon emissions” serves as an attention-grabbing start.

2. **Provide Context- The “Why” and “How”-:** After engaging your audience’s interest with the key findings, explain how the research was conducted and why it matters. Clearly state the research question and its significance, and explain the basic framework of the methods. Do not overwhelm the readers with detailed technical information, but reserve this information for later sections.
3. **Support with Evidence- The “What”:** The intermediate section of your research paper should present all the evidence behind the major results. Data should be presented in easy-to-read graphics to help readers understand your key observations. Well-designed data presentation makes people more likely to connect with the information.⁸
4. **Conclude with Background- The “So What”:** The base of the pyramid includes specialized details which help experts understand how results were achieved. This section clearly highlights methodology, limitations and future directions. These details should not overshadow the key findings, instead should provide valuable context for a deeper understanding of the work.

5. Practical Tips for Implementing the Inverted Pyramid

1. **Write the abstract first:** The abstract functions as the essential summary of your research, making it your first step in the writing process. Clearly present the key findings, together with context and implications, in concise statements, creating a focused summary that retains only critical information.
2. **Use visuals strategically:** Strategic visual presentation through charts and graphs enhances the understanding of complex information. The visual elements must be distinctly labelled to support the main points, reinforcing the findings rather than distracting from them.
3. **Edit ruthlessly:** The inverted pyramid structure demands brevity and precision. Do not include information that is not consequential in providing insights on important outcomes. The primary trick is to avoid watering down your message and making it as clear and concise as possible.
4. **Modify your message:** Carefully consider your audience when applying the inverted pyramid. For general audience, highlight the most practical elements of your study. For experts, dwell deeper into the methodology and theoretical contributions.
5. **Leverage multiple platforms:** Adapt the inverted pyramid structure for different communication channels. For instance, use a concise summary for social media platforms, a detailed report for academic journals, and a visually engaging presentation for

conferences. Although each platform has its own unique requirements, but the inverted pyramid can be adapted to fit them all.

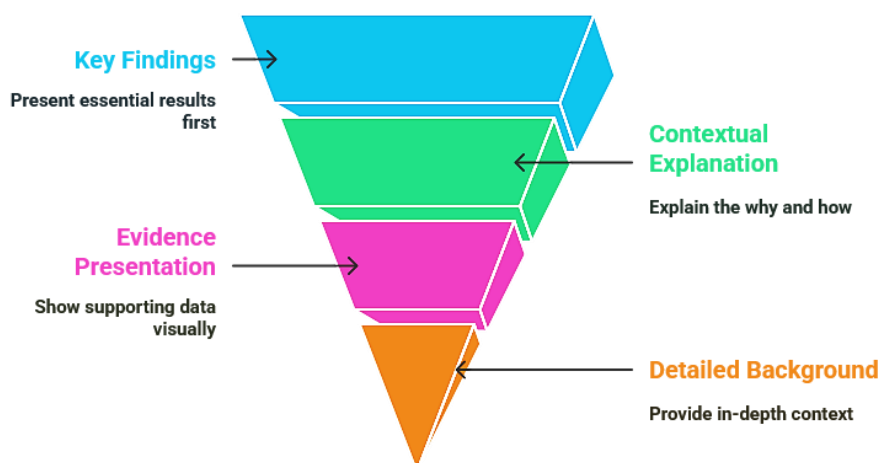


Figure 1: Inverted pyramid for research communication

6. Challenges and Considerations

While the inverted pyramid offers numerous advantages, it also presents challenges. Human attention spans are shrinking, with readers spending an average of 15 seconds to decide whether to engage with online content.¹⁰ So, the most important concern becomes balancing conciseness with completeness, especially when dealing with complex topics. Researchers may find it difficult to extract a short and impactful headline from intricate information. Additionally, some academic disciplines may adhere to traditional writing structures that emphasize detailed literature reviews or methodology sections, making it difficult to adopt the inverted pyramid approach.⁹ However, as the demand for accessible and impactful research continues to grow, the inverted pyramid serves as a valuable tool to bridge the gap between academic rigor and public relevance.

7. Conclusion

The inverted pyramid is not just about writing—it's about rethinking research's role in society. Leading with the key findings, ensuring clarity of content, and backing evidence with proof will help make research work more accessible, influential, and relevant to a broader audience. As the demand for research with real-world applications increases, mastering the technique of inverted pyramid will be the key for achieving greater impact.¹¹ This technique not only ensures that the research reaches its intended audience but also confirms a lasting impact. In the ever evolving academic and professional landscape, those who master this framework will be at the forefront of innovation, contributing significantly to global conversations and driving meaningful change.

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9. Conflict of Interest

None.

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