

How to write a paper: a checklist

- Intro – the main insight:
 - What is this paper about
 - What is the main point of this paper in non-technical terms
 - Give an overview of the paper
- The problem:
 - Why was this paper written?
 - What is the specific problem addressed? (this can be a theoretical or an empirical problem)
 - Why is this problem a problem? (most likely includes a survey of the literature)
- The proposal:
 - What is the main proposal put forward in this paper?
- Solving the problem:
 - How does this proposal solve the problem?
 - This should be explained in detail so everybody understands it
 - (Don't think things are obvious and hence don't need to be spelled out)
- Motivating the proposal
 - Is there independent evidence for the proposal?
 - Does this proposal make further prediction?
 - What is the empirical domain for the proposal?
 - Is the proposal learnable?
 - ...
- Further consequences
 - Does the proposal change our view of the world? In what way?
 - Is this a welcome result?
 - Can the proposal be applied elsewhere?
- Comparison with other proposals
 - How does the proposal relate to previous proposals?
 - How does the proposal relate to the overall theory of grammar?
 - Why can't previous proposal solve the problem?
 - Why is the present proposal superior?

How to present a paper

- Don't present the paper page by page
- Try and understand the main point of the paper and how it works technically
- Concentrate on getting the main point across
- Don't present all the pieces of evidence/consequences/etc. be selective
- Keep track of all the terms you don't know and try and find out what they mean (e.g. by asking me)
- Give a "roadmap"