Methods

- Detailed descriptions of materials used (e.g. source of insects, food source) and methods of the experiments.
- Can be abbreviated, with a citation of a previous article, but still give the reader a general idea of methods.

[Day and Gastel, p. 60-65]

Methods (continued)

- Use lots of subheadings
  - First words of a paragraph can be like a subheading
- Chronological order for field studies
- Logical order for lab studies
- Statistical techniques in last paragraph of a section

Methods (continued)

- Consider a "general methods" paragraph at the beginning, to describe methods or materials that are common to all or most of the experiments.
  - Insect strains/rearing methods, site locations, insecticides, etc.
Methods (continued)

- Past tense
- Try the active voice for methods
  - I/we sampled trees …
  instead of
  - Trees were sampled …

Methods (continued)

- Think through your methods, even before you write the first draft
- Review your first draft
  - “Walk through”
    - Do they make sense?
    - Are they in a logical order?
    - Could someone else do it?
    - Is anything left out?

Numbers

- In text,
  - Write out numbers one through nine
  - Use numerals for 10 or more
- But always ---
  - Use numerals for all units of measure;
    e.g. 3 h, 4 d, 5 g

Numbers

- Do not start a sentence with a numeral (reword or write out)
  - Larvae (10 per replication) were…
  - Plots (6 m x 8m, five replications)…
  - Five eggs per dish…
- Always use metric system
  - m, km, kg, metric tons, hectares, etc.
Metric Units

- Always use correct abbrev.
  - $\mu$g, mg, g, kg
  - s, h, d, wk, mo
  - ml, liter
  - mm, cm, m, km
  - not hr, gm
  - not ml., sec.
- Do not use plural “s”
- Specify all units in figures and tables (e.g., insects/m$^2$ ± S.E.)

Methods (continued)

- A table can be helpful to summarize information that is too lengthy to include in the text and that the reader may need to refer to later
- Use figures to show geography or apparatus that can’t be easily described in text. More common in thesis or dissertation than in journal article.

Methods (continued)

- Photos should generally be black and white.
  Again, these are more common in the thesis or dissertation.
  - B&W is more easily accepted by graduate school and can be photo copied.
  - It’s often harder to show things in a photo than in a drawing

Assignments

- Read Day and Gastel, Chapter 11
- Revised Introductions and Materials and Methods due Feb 12
- Small groups meet the week of Feb 18