Suggested Outline for Writing an Academic Article
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- Abstract (250 words or less)
    - State your research question
    - Explain how this research question speaks to a larger theoretical puzzle or gap in the literature
    - Describe the data that you use to answer your research question
    - State what you find
    - Describe what these findings suggest about the answer to your research question
    - Explain why these findings are important

- Introduction (3 paragraphs)
    - Describe the puzzle or gap in the literature that you will address with your data
        - What do we know?
        - What do we not know?
        - What will you tell us?
    - Identify your research question and explain how you answer it
        - What question will you answer?
        - What data will you use to answer this question?
        - What do you find?
    - Explain why your findings are important
        - What is the answer to your research question?
        - How does this answer broaden, clarify, or challenge existing knowledge/theories?

- Literature Review (1,000 words or less)
    - Restate the puzzle or gap in the literature that you will address
    - Explain why this puzzle or gap is important to address
    - Describe (in more detail than in the intro) what we know about this topic/issue
    - Describe (in more detail than in the intro) what we do not know about this topic/issue
    - State your research question (i.e., "In light of these lingering questions, I seek to examine…")
    - Explain how your research question solves the puzzle or fills the gap in the literature (i.e., "Answering this question allows me to…")
    *Note: The point of a literature review is not actually to review all of the relevant literature. The point is to make the case for why your study is important.

- Methods (6-8 short paragraphs)
    - Provide a brief overview of the study.
    - Describe your research site, why you chose it, and how you gained access
    - Describe your research participants (the people you observed)
    - Discuss your role in the field and how your identity shaped your observations
    - Describe the fieldwork you conducted and the data you collected
    - Describe how you analyzed (or will analyze) the data you collected
    - Describe the methodological limitations of your study

- Analysis
  - State your argument
  - Identify 3 supporting points – 3 ways that your data support your arguments
  - Identify 2-3 patterns in the data that provide evidence for each supporting point
  - For each pattern:
    - Describe an example from your data that typifies this pattern
    - Provide a brief fieldnote excerpt for that example
    - Briefly explain how this example represents the larger pattern
    - Briefly explain how this pattern provides evidence for Supporting Point 1

    *Note: Everything that you include in your analysis should directly support your argument, and that argument should be the answer to your research question. A clear structure (with topic sentences and transitions) is very important for writing an analysis that meets this goal.

- Discussion/Conclusion (1,000 words or less)
  - Summarize your findings
    - Remind readers of the puzzle/gap in the literature that you are trying to solve
    - Remind readers of the specific research question that you have answered
    - Briefly review what you found
    - Briefly explain what these findings imply about the answer to your research question
  - Discuss the implications of these findings
    - Explain how your findings solve the puzzle or fill the gap in the literature
    - Explain how the resolution of this gap/puzzle helps to clarify, challenge, or expand existing knowledge or theory
    - Using existing literature, explain why your findings are or are not surprising
  - Conclude by reviewing why these findings (and the larger puzzle/gap they address) are important
- Bibliography