**Title and journal**

* Is the title appropriate, succinct, eye-catching, misleading?
* Is the article in a prestigious journal or a less prestigious journal?  How can you tell the difference?

**Type of article/study**

* [IM Journal Club Flowchart](https://libraryguides.missouri.edu/ld.php?content_id=49699365)

**Who are the authors?**

* Do you know them? Do you know and trust their prior work? Institutional affiliation of the authors?
* Have they published before in this area? Are they listed in the references for the article?

**Timelines and dates**

* When was the article published? What was state of the art at the time? Does newer information preclude findings of an older paper (ex: the disease has been reclassified based on new etiologic agent).
* Was there a long lag between submission and publication (maybe a difficult review?)

**Sponsorship of the study and potential for bias**

* What was the funding source?
* Do the authors have any conflict of interest?

**Abstract**

* Does the abstract mention the hypothesis or purpose of the manuscript, a summary of study design, and the main findings of the study?

**Introduction**

* Is it a good, brief review of the topic to be studied?
* Does it present the previously known information and then lead you directly to the “knowledge gap”, or the information void that the current study is aimed to fill?
* First chance to have some key references of prior work “catch your eye” for future reading.
* Is there a statement of the purpose of the current study?

**Materials and Methods (M&M)**

* Do you understand the basic methods from this section? Are there residual questions about how the study was done that could change your conclusions regarding this study? Could you repeat the study from the information presented in the M&M?
* Are the statistics described in the M&M? Are the statistics appropriate for the study design?

**Results**

* Do the results “make sense”? Do the results follow logically from the M&M?
* Is there data that was collected (from the M&M) but not presented in Results?
  + Worse, are there Results presented that are not part of the M&M?
* Are the Results presented in a readable & understandable fashion? Would a table or figure have been easier to understand?
* Tables and figures
  + Are they of good quality? Clear and concise? Did they help you understand the article?

**Discussion**

* Does the Discussion begin with the main finding of the study? The discussion should not be a review; it should explain the “why” for the observed results and compare this to prior known information.
* New data/results should not appear in the Discussion section.
* After having read the results, do you arrive at the same conclusions as the authors?
* Are there any more references cited in the discussion that you might want to pull and review?

**Overall assessment of the article**

* Be able to summarize key points in 3-5 sentences without looking at the article
* What did the authors do well? What are the weaknesses of the paper?  (Strive for balance)
* If you could repeat the study, what would you do differently to improve it?
* How does this article fit into current knowledge of the topic? Will it alter practice patterns or spur new research?