What are Some Goals of a Methods Section?
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• Present the *experimental design*.

• Give enough detail for readers to *replicate* your work.

• Provide enough detail to allow readers to *interpret your results* (virtual witnessing).
“Experimental Section”
According to Paradis and Zimmerman

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What are Some Pitfalls of a Methods Section?
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- Providing **too little or too much** information.

- **Reiterating** published methods rather than citing them.

- Writing strictly in **chronological order** (alternatives: most important first, most fundamental first, etc.) or in the order of your specific aims.

- Methods and results don’t **correspond** (you have to provide methods for all the experiments you report).

- **Forgetting to use visual organizers** that direct readers to specific aspects of the methods section, e.g., subheads, illustrations.

- Writing a **protocol instead of a methods section**. Methods are written in narrative form in **past tense**.
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NEJM Example
Structure: Subheads, Topic Sentences

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Things to Avoid in your Methods Sections

• Over use of “then.”

• Over use and misuse of “using.”
  – Alternatives: “with,” “by using,” “by means of”
  – Misuse: e.g., Using a fiberoptic broncoscope, dogs were immunized with sheep cells.

• Over structuring
  – e.g., one sentence paragraphs with subheads
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Introduction and Methods

Due Dates

Burge and Sabatini: Friday, March 19
(that’s NEXT WEEK)

Please get drafts to me no later than the
MORNING OF Thursday, March 18