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The **Title page** should comprise: title of the manuscript, first name and surname and affiliation (department, university, city, state/province, and country) for all authors. The address, telephone and fax numbers, and e-mail address of the corresponding author should also be included.

The **Summary** should be informative and completely comprehensible, briefly present the topic, state the scope of the experiments, indicate significant data, and point out major findings and conclusions. It should not exceed 200 words. Standard nomenclature should be used and abbreviations should be avoided or defined. No references should be cited. Immediately following the Summary, up to five Keywords should be provided; these will be used for indexing purposes.

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**Results** should be presented with clarity and precision. The results should be written in the past tense when describing findings in the author's experiments. Previously published findings should be written in the present tense. Results should be explained, but largely without referring to the literature.

The **Discussion** should be confined to interpretation of the results (not to recapitulating them), also in light of the pertinent literature on the subject. When appropriate, the Results and Discussion sections can be combined. This will be the case in research notes.

**Acknowledgements** should be presented after the Discussion section. Personal acknowledgements should only be made with the permission of the person(s) named.

**Competing interests** should be declared by authors at submission indicating whether they have any financial, personal, or professional interests that could be construed to have influenced their paper.

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#### Published papers

Venugopalan VP, Kuehn A, Hausner M, Springael D, Wilderer PA, Wuertz S (2005) Architecture of a nascent *Sphingomonas* sp. biofilm under varied hydrodynamic conditions. *Appl Environ Microbiol* 71:2677-2686

#### Books

Miller JH (1972) Experiments in molecular genetics. 2nd ed. Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory Press, Cold Spring Harbor, New York, USA

#### Book chapters

Lo N, Eggleton P (2011) Termite phylogenetics and co-cladogenesis with symbionts. In: Bignell DE, Yves R, Nathan L (eds) *Biology of termites: a modern synthesis*, 2nd ed. Springer, Heidelberg, Germany, pp.27-50

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