



Results and Discussion

The results and discussion sections of your research article present the major results of the study and a direct, logical interpretation of these results. The results section is usually accompanied by graphics. Note that the purpose and contents of the results and discussion are the same for both formats.

I. Results

a.) Text:

The text does not merely repeat the data already expressed in tables and figures. Rather, it highlights unexpected findings and major results. It should, however, describe the findings expressed in the graphics, so that one can understand them independent of the figures.

Purpose: The text describes, in paragraph form, the major results of your study. This space does not serve as interpretation. Phrases such as “this means” and “shows that” should not appear here.

b.) Graphics:

Graphics may be in the form of drawings, diagrams, photographs, tables, and graphs. They should be large enough to read easily but not so big as to waste space. All graphics should be accompanied by detailed captions describing their contents. They should be labeled in order of appearance in text (i.e. figure 1, table 1, etc.) The symbols should be clear and a legend, if necessary, should be simple and easy to interpret.

Purpose: Illustrations support, clarify, and emphasize the information in the text. They help speed the reader’s understanding and provide visual evidence of the results, which is easier to believe than text.

II. Discussion:

The discussion will state how well the experiment answered the question or proved the hypothesis. If the anticipated results do not match the actual results, explain why not. You should describe the meaning of individual results without yet relating them to the broader context of the work; that is done in the conclusion. (See the reverse side of this handout—“Putting the Results into Context: Conclusions.”)

Purpose: The function of this section is to provide a specific interpretation of the major results stated in the result section.

III. Formats

1. Use with small-scale experiments where the results are few and very connected

Results: Text of the results section goes here, in paragraph form. Graphics are printed nearby.

Discussion: Text of the discussion is here. Sometimes the discussion is part of the conclusion, and the conclusion goes from narrow to general.

2. Use with complex results that are difficult to find relationships between

Results/Discussion

First major result: Text of one result is here in paragraph form, and transitions directly to discussion with no separate heading.

Second major result: Text of the next result is here, transitioning into its discussion. After all the results,



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| there is a separate conclusion.