

Results/Findings

Description

The term ‘results’ or ‘findings’ can describe the outcomes of research as well as the analysis of a **literature review**. As a section of an extended research text such as a **dissertation** or **research article**, results/findings often initially describe what the data show (Hahn Fox & Jennings, 2014). For example, in Pieretti et al.’s (2011) quantitative study of an avian community’s soundscape, the results section reports on the number of bird “vocalizations” the researchers identified:

A total of 30,758 vocalizations pertaining to 13 species were counted during the three recording sessions [on specific dates], as shown in Table 1. The detailed descriptions of the birds’ singing activity at each station is [sic] reported in Appendices A, B and C.

Recording sites three and eight were the most active in terms of songs during the 10th June recording session (2099 and 1604 songs, respectively), as were the seventh and fourth sites on 28th June (1678 and 1090 songs) and the eleventh and sixth sites on 19th July (988 and 971 songs). (p. 871)

This example does not discuss the significance of these results, but covers those points in the **discussion**. In other disciplines the results/findings section encompasses that content by providing analytic findings, particularly in fields that use theory as a lens for data analysis. In those cases, authors discuss the notions from a **theoretical framework** that enabled them to develop the analytic findings.

Although people talk about ‘writing up’ the results/findings of a study, writing often begins before data collection and continues through the project. Such writing can involve making notes about research methods, emerging analyses, and ideas and inspiration, captured in researcher journals, spreadsheets, or laboratory notebooks (Hanauer, 2014). Qualitative

26 data analysis also usually involves writing memos about the research process as well as the
27 emerging findings (Emerson et al., 2011).

28 **Variations and Tensions**

29 Particularly in qualitative research, the significance of findings is often first discussed
30 as findings are presented, then again in the discussion and **conclusion** (Swales & Feak,
31 2012). Some academic texts combine the results and discussion sections. For example, in
32 Leenstra et al.'s (2014) study of hens' egg-laying performance, the "Results and discussion"
33 section (p. 3) presents the data collected from three sources in three tables, and discusses the
34 significance of results from each data source separately.

35 Longer results/findings sections may include subheadings. In terms of language, past
36 tense verbs are typically used to report results/findings, with the simple present often used to
37 discuss their significance (American Psychological Association, 2020).

38 **Graduate Student Voice**

39 My qualitative dissertation includes two findings chapters. I started each by
40 presenting the findings descriptively then supported my analytic claims with extracts from the
41 data. I interpreted my claims by drawing on theoretical lenses and connecting my findings to
42 the literature. —Mahmoud Altalouli

43 **Reflection Questions**

- 44 1. How are verb tenses used in results/findings sections in your discipline? Do you see
45 other changes in language use within or across sections?
- 46 2. Where do texts in your discipline discuss the significance of results/findings? Does
47 this practice vary across genres?

48 **For Further Reading**

49 Graduate Researcher.space. (n.d.). *Writing the results/findings section*.

50 <https://graduateresearcherspace.wordpress.com/writing/writing-the-findings-and->

51 discussion-sections/. This webpage discusses the organization of the results/findings
52 section and its elements.

53 Swales, J. M., & Feak, C. B. (2012). *Academic writing for graduate students: Essential tasks*
54 *and skills* (3rd ed.). University of Michigan Press. The section, “Results Sections”
55 (pp. 305-326), discusses the difference between results and discussion sections and
56 describes the common structure of the results section.

57 **References**

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- 77 Swales, J. M., & Feak, C. B. (2012). *Academic writing for graduate students: Essential tasks*
78 *and skills* (3rd ed.). University of Michigan Press.
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