

IMRaD: Results and Discussion

Are your Results *only* Results?

This seems like a simple enough question, doesn't it? Yet, often Results accidentally run together with information that belongs in the Discussion section, or they become lodged between statements that *interpret* rather than *summarize findings*. Similarly, Discussion sections might inadvertently contain new (previously unmentioned) results. Ensure that Results and Discussion are separate sections.

Strategies:

If you are unsure about which details to include in either section OR are having trouble getting started with your Results and Discussion sections, consider the following:

1. Start sorting! Use the definitions in the chart below to separate Results from Discussion details.

<i>Results</i>	<i>Discussion</i>
Asks, "What did you observe?" <u>Objective</u> data/findings (response to hypothesis) supporting evidence for each finding charts, tables, figures (Shorter, more succinct section)	Asks, "What do these observations mean?" <u>Subjective</u> explanations of findings/data evaluation of findings/data comparison to earlier research limitations larger implications of findings (Longer, more detailed section)

2. If you've already drafted your Results and Discussion sections, use the definitions above to:
 - a) generate questions to ask about each detail:
 - "Is this purely *data* or *my findings*?" or
 - "Is this an *explanation* of my findings/observations/data?"
 - b) *and* highlight Results vs. Discussion section information as you review. This way, you'll have clear sorting markers to later separate, re-organize (under appropriate subheadings/sections), and revise your draft.

Helpful hint: Use the tips above to review each section a couple of paragraphs at a time. (Taking 3-5-minute stretch breaks will keep your mind fresh and focused as you review.)
3. Skim for citations. Results should not contain citations or reflections on research. These comparisons between your results and other research should appear in your Discussion section.
4. Check your verbs, and remember the tense shift.
 - c) Results only include information from your experimentation or research already conducted. Results have "already happened." Therefore, this section should be written in the past tense.
 - d) The Discussion analyzes the results. Analysis is written in the present tense.

5. Consult your rubric. This is a helpful drafting/proofreading tool for any section of your IMRaD draft!