



Discussion Sections

The last parts of a research article might be labelled in various ways. How are they most frequently labelled in your discipline(s)?

- Discussion
- Results and Discussion
- ...

Labels for the final parts of RA

- Discussion
- Results and Discussion
- Results and Conclusions
- Results, Discussion, and Conclusions
- Summary and Conclusions
- Conclusion
- Final Remarks
- Final Considerations

What are discussions?

What are discussions?

- they need to be more than summaries
- they should go beyond the results
- “In the discussion section you should step back and take a broad look at your findings and your study as a whole” (Weissberg and Buker, 1990: 160)

What are discussions?

- theoretical
- abstract
- general
- integrated with the field
- connected to the real world
- concerned with implications and applications
- likely to discuss the implications of the study

What is the language of Discussion sections of research articles

Phrases of generality:

Overall, ...

In general, ...

On the whole, ...

In the main, ...

The overall results indicate...

What is the language of Discussion sections of research articles

Phrases for stating limitations:

Notwithstanding its limitations, this study does suggest...

However exploratory, this study may offer some insight into...

The limitations of this study are clear:...

This analysis has concentrated on...

**How are Discussion sections
structured?**

The structure of discussion sections

MOVE 1: Background information

MOVE 2: Summarizing and reporting key results

MOVE 3: Commenting on the key results

MOVE 4: Stating the limitations of the study

MOVE 5: Making recommendations

MOVE 1: Background information

Prior work has documented the effectiveness of psychosocial intervention in improving quality of life... (revisiting previous research)

However, these studies have either been short-term or... (revisiting the gap/weakness/etc.)

MOVE 1: Background information

In this study we tested the extent to which an extended three-month stress management program improved quality of life among a group of patients being treated for stress-related skin disorders...

(revisiting the methodology used in this study)

MOVE 2: Summarizing and reporting key results

We found that in virtually all cases, participation in our three-month stress management program was associated with substantial increases in

(summarizing the results)

MOVE 3: Commenting on the key results

This suggests that ...

It is evident ...

The results seem to indicate that...

It could be inferred therefore that ...

We found evidence to suggest that ...

(Providing a general explanation or interpretation of what your results might mean)

MOVE 3: Commenting on the key results

- You can use the **Present Simple** – to express permanent truths and facts, it will give your sentence the status of a fact

We found that x occurs, which indicates / suggests that y causes z...

- You can also use the **Past Simple** if you are less confident or less sure of the results

We found that x occurred, which indicated / suggested that y caused z...

MOVE 3: Commenting on the key results

Hedging = cautious/vague language, softening the strength of the claims you are making

Rewrite this sentence using hedging:

We found that sunbathing is related to the onset of cancer.

MOVE 3: Commenting on the key results: hedging

We found that sunbathing is related to the onset of cancer.

We found that sunbathing was related to the onset of cancer.

We found that sunbathing may have been related to the onset of cancer.

We found evidence to suggest that sunbathing may have been related to the onset of cancer.

We found evidence to suggest that in some cases/in many cases, sunbathing may have been related to the onset of cancer.

We found evidence to suggest that in some cases, excessive sunbathing may have been related to the onset of certain types of cancer.

It is thought that excessive sunbathing may sometimes be considered as contributing to the onset of certain types of cancer.

MOVE 3: Commenting on the key results

- State how your study relates to and is different from existing research
- Compare the work/approach of other researchers with yours in order to validate your work or point to weaknesses in theirs.

Our current findings expand prior work [5].

Unlike McGowan, we did not identify

This method provides results that are comparable to existing

MOVE 3: Commenting on the key results

Vocabulary used to state your achievement or contribution can be:

- **exciting:** *compelling, exceptional, excellent ...*
- **less exciting but still positive:** *important, realistic, relevant, exact, clear, novel ...*

Our results provide compelling evidence that...

The presence of such high levels is a novel finding.

MOVE 4: Stating the limitations of the study

- Outline the limitations of your own work and provide suggestions for future work
- These suggestions improve the status of your work by communicating that there is much research to be done in this area.

Our results are encouraging and should be validated in a larger cohort of women.

Future work should focus on ...

MOVE 5: Making recommendations

- Indicate possible applications or applicability of your study
- Typical use of modals such as *could*, *should* and *may*

Our technique can be applied to ...

This approach has potential in areas such as ...

This could eventually lead to the identification of ...

The solution method could be applied ...