

Research Question

Methodology

Data Collection

Analysis

Writing and Developing
**YOUR
METHODS
SECTION**

AGENDA

Week 11 for SOWK 460w

Research article activity

Discussion and tips regarding writing your methods section

Time to work in your groups

RESEARCH ARTICLE ACTIVITY

from the [APA Style Website](#)

➤ **To get us started today, you are going to pick an article that is a study that you are going to cite in your final paper. As a group, go through and complete each of the parts. We will come back to this article later.**



7th Edition

Research Article Activity

This activity helps students find, cite, analyze, and summarize a scholarly research article. For each step of the activity, type your responses directly into the text fields provided, or copy the questions into your preferred word-processing program and answer them there. Complete this activity multiple times to help you write papers such as literature reviews.

Notes for each part indicate where to find more information in the seventh edition of the [Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, Seventh Edition](#) or on the [APA Style website](#).

Step 1: Finding a Research Article

The best place to find a reliable research article is in a peer-reviewed scholarly journal accessed from a research database or platform, such as APA PsycNet, ProQuest, OvidSP, or EBSCOhost. Check with your university library to see which platforms and databases your school has access to and which ones are recommended for your subject area. [APA journals](#) are a good starting point for students of psychology.

Many types of research articles are published in scholarly journals, including quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods studies. In general, research articles have the following characteristics:

- report original, or primary, research
- include distinct sections that reflect the stages of the research process, usually the following sections in the following order:
 - Introduction: description of the purpose of the investigation and the issues being reported, review of the background literature, and study objectives and/or hypotheses
 - Method: full description of each step of the study, including the participants involved, materials used, procedures followed, and research design
 - Results (quantitative article): report of the results of statistical analyses conducted
 - Findings (qualitative article): report of the findings using natural language
 - Discussion: summary and interpretation of the study, strengths and limitations, implications of the results or findings, and next steps

Consult Chapters 1 and 3 of the *Publication Manual* for further description of research articles and the sections often included in them, respectively.

WHY DOES THE METHODS SECTION MATTER

- **Make the study reproducible**
 - **It helps clarify and understand the results**
 - **Establishes the credibility of the research being reported**
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CONSIDERATION FOR YOUR METHOD SECTION

Imagine yourself replicating the study in the future and the information you would need.

Adhere to ethical standards and reporting guidelines

Remember, the dual purpose of methods is for understanding and replication.

Consider a visual aid such as a flowchart, decision tree, or checklist, as they bring clarity.

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Examples

REVIEW THE METHODS SECTION

- What stands do you notice about their methods sections?
- What do you feel you learned by reading the methods sections?
- What is something you could do in your methods sections based on reviewing these?

Whole Class Discussion:
What are things that stood out from the methods section from your first article you looked at this evening?

TIPS FOR WRITING YOUR METHODS

➤ **Use first-person pronouns**

➤ **Write using past tense**

➤ **Be precise and concise**

➤ **Capture changes to protocols**

➤ **Include ethical framework**

➤ **Consider active versus
passive voice**

“I” OR “WE”

Generally, academic writing is done using the third person. The APA style guide does tell us when we are talking about our work (e.g., the methods of our study) or personal reactions, to use first-person pronouns in our writing.

Tips for Writing Your Methods

USE FIRST PERSON

Different Sections
Usually Require
Different Verb Tense

Wrote

Write

**Will
write**

Past

Present

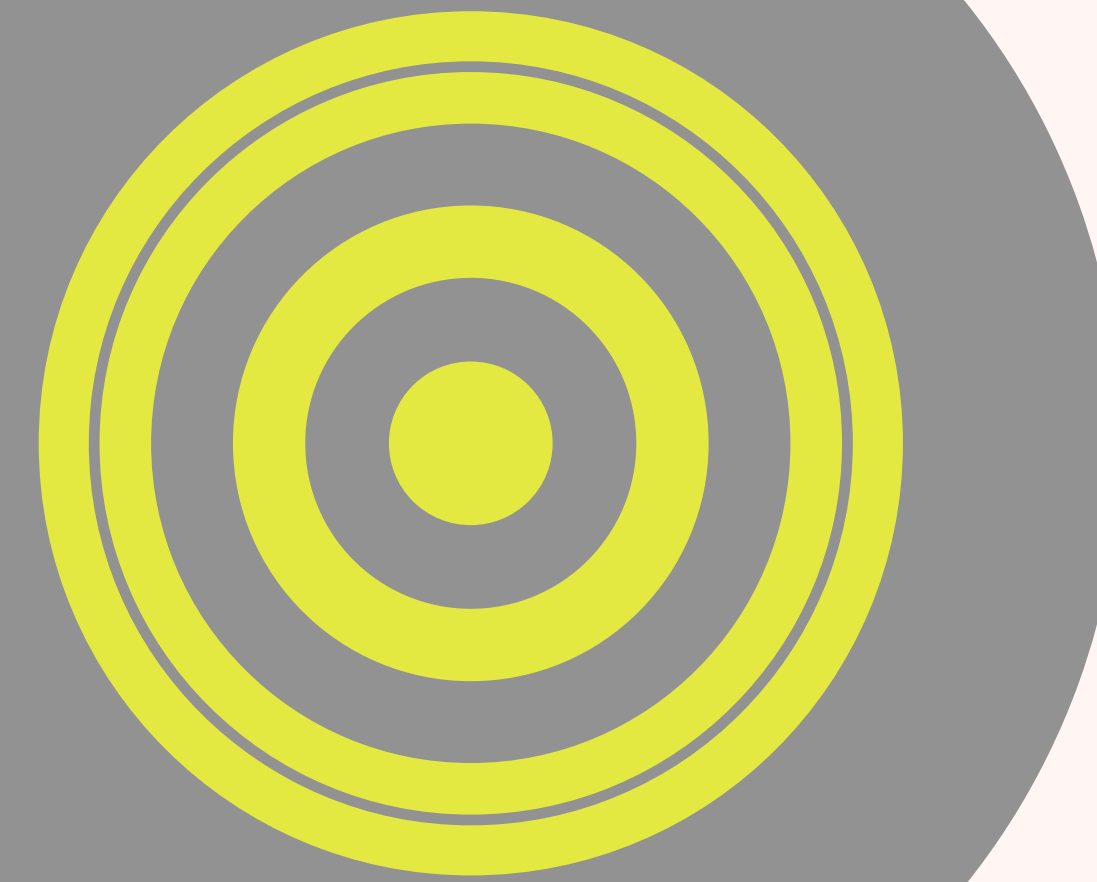
Future

Verbs are direct, vigorous communicators. Use a chosen verb tense consistently throughout the same and adjacent paragraphs of a paper to ensure smooth expression.

Tips for Writing Your Methods

USE PAST TENSE

Encourage precision and conciseness. Every sentence should contribute to an understanding of what was done and why. Avoid unnecessary detail that does not contribute to the overall understanding of the methodology.



Tips for Writing Your Methods

BE PRECISE AND CONCISE

(PLOS, n.d.)



TRANSPARENCY BETWEEN WHAT YOU PLANNED TO DO AND WHAT YOU ACTUALLY IMPLEMENTED

Tips for Writing Your Methods

CAPTURE CHANGES TO PROTOCOLS

(PLOS, n.d.)

**THE METHODS SECTION IS
WHERE YOU CAN DISCUSS
HOW YOU HANDLED YOUR
EVALUATION ETHICALLY**



Tips for Writing Your Methods

INCLUDE ETHICAL FRAMEWORK

Let's Get Active: Active Voice Writing Guide

Complete Worksheet



<https://apastyle.apa.org/instructional-aids/active-voice.pdf>

Active Voice

the subject of a sentence is followed by the verb and then the object of the verb (e.g., “the children ate the cookies”).

Passive voice

the object of the verb is followed by the verb (usually a form of “to be” + past participle + the word “by”) and then the subject (e.g., “the cookies were eaten by the children”). If the subject is omitted (e.g., “the cookies were eaten”), it may result in confusion about who performed the action (did the children eat the cookies, or was it the dog?).

Tips for Writing Your Methods

CONSIDER ACTIVE VS PASSIVE VOICE

<https://apastyle.apa.org/style-grammar-guidelines/grammar/active-passive-voice>

DIRECTION IN THE TEMPLATE

Be sure to justify all of your data collection decisions.

- **Where did you get your data?**
 - **What new data was collected?**
 - **What secondary data was used?**
 - **What methods did you use to acquire your data?**
 - **Did you collect data from the entire population, or did you sample?**
 - **If so, how did you sample?**
 - **How did you identify or create your data collection instruments?**
 - **How did you test your instruments for readability, reliability, validity, and cultural appropriateness?**
 - **How did you determine the quality and utility of existing data?**
 - **From whom did you collect existing data?**
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GROUP WORK TIME

