

Guidelines for Writing APA Style Results Sections

APA style research manuscripts have a standard format for expressing the statistical analyses and results of the data analysis. This format should be followed in writing the results of undergraduate research, thesis projects, and other research articles. In general, the order of information presented in APA style Results sections is as follows.

Summary of descriptive statistics for variables. Variables that describe the research participants should be presented in the Participants section. These variables may (or may not) be considered in the analysis of the primary variables under investigation. For example, if individuals who identify as men and women are expected to differ on a variable, then gender should be considered in both the Participants section and as a grouping variable in the Results section. However, if men and women are not expected to differ on a variable, then gender should be reported in the Participants section and not used as a grouping variable in the Results section. Report the descriptive statistics for all variables and levels measured in the project.

Statement of the alpha level set for all analyses (e.g., .05). The alpha level should be reported prior to the presentation of any statistical tests. If more than one alpha level is used, it should be stated prior to the presentation of the tests using each value.

Summary of correlation coefficients. After the descriptive statistics are provided for each variable, bivariate examination of the data may be appropriate. In general, the correlations among variables under investigation are provided in a correlation matrix (included as a table), and statistically significant correlations (and those that were expected to be) are stated in the text of the Results section as well.

Summary of inferential statistics. Inferential statistics should be presented after descriptive statistics and correlations. The order of description of the analysis in an APA style report should follow the same order as the statistical analysis. For example, if a factorial analysis of variance is computed, the omnibus test should be reported prior to the post hoc tests.

When describing the statistical tests performed, the variables tested should be stated explicitly in a sentence along with the statistical test computed on the variables. For example, a hypothetical study that examined types of information processing instructions on participants' ability to recall information could be stated as follows, "A one-way analysis of variance was performed to examine the effect of information processing instruction condition (i.e., letter count, background color, categorization) on recall." This statement clearly indicates the type of statistical analysis computed along with the independent variable and its levels and the dependent variable.