

YORKWAC Infobase

Data-driven Research Papers: Writing Your Discussion

The purpose of the discussion section is to state your interpretations and opinions, explain the implications of your findings, and make suggestions for future research.

Here are a few steps that will help you write an effective Discussion:

1. Begin by re-stating your hypothesis/research question and answering the questions posted in the Introduction.
 - Summarize the most important findings first.
2. Then, address all the results relating to the questions, regardless of whether or not your findings were statistically significant.
 - Describe the patterns, principles and relationships your results show and explain how they relate to expectations and literature cited in your Introduction.
 - Also explain plausibly any objections, contradictions or exceptions.
3. Situate your research in broader context.
 - Suggest the theoretical implications of your research and practical application of your results.
 - Extend your findings to other situations or other species
 - Provide the reader with the big picture – do your findings help us understand a broader topic?

Things to avoid:

- Do not include too much information.
- Do not speculate too much.
- Improper tense (the discussion, unlike the results section, is largely written in the *present tense*)

The **YORKWAC Infobase** includes many other Infosheets that can help you with your writing assignment.

If you want more information on organizing your data-driven research paper, you might want to try:

Infosheet #7, Organizing a Data-driven Research Paper

Infosheet #8, Data-driven Research Papers: The Introduction

Infosheet #9, Data-driven Research Papers: Research Design and Methods

Infosheet #10, Data-driven Research Papers: Reporting Your Findings