



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.

## Step 2: Citing a Research Article

Once you have identified a research article on a topic of interest, create its reference list entry and in-text citation. The reference list entry allows readers to identify and retrieve the work, and the in-text citation serves as a simple and consistent way to refer to the article within the text.

### Reference List Entry

To create a reference list entry, gather the following information:

Author(s):

Year of publication:

Title of article:

Journal name:

Volume:

Issue number:

Page range or article number:

DOI:

Check if advance online publication  
(replaces volume/issue/pages):

Use the information to create a reference list entry according to the [journal article reference examples](#).

Reference list entry (remember to apply hanging indent in your paper):

### In-Text Citations

Use the author(s) and year from your reference list entry to [create the in-text citations](#).

Parenthetical in-text citation:

Narrative in-text citation:

Consult Chapters 8 and 9 of the *Publication Manual* for further information on creating in-text citations and reference list entries, respectively.

## Step 3: Analyzing a Research Article

Research articles are typically dense with information. The following questions provide an organized way for you to break down the parts of the research article and understand its purpose, methods, findings, and implications. Consult Chapter 3 of the *Publication Manual* for more.

### Introduction

1. What is the topic of the article?
2. What is the study hypothesis (or hypotheses)?
3. What type of research was conducted (e.g., quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods empirical study or meta-analysis) or what was the paper type (e.g., literature review, replication)?

### Method

4. How many people (or nonhuman animals) participated in the study?
5. Who were the participants? Describe from where they were recruited (e.g., college student subject pool, community) and all relevant personal characteristics (e.g., age, gender, race/ethnicity).
6. Where was the study conducted (e.g., online, lab, home, school, work, hospital, clinic)?
7. What tests or measures were collected (e.g., surveys, questionnaires)?
8. What analyses were conducted (e.g., correlation, *t* test, chi-square test, analysis of variance, thematic)?

## Results or Findings

9. What are the main results or findings from the study?
10. If there are tables and/or figures, what types of tables (e.g., demographic, correlation) and/or figures (e.g., bar graph, participant flow) are they? What important information do they convey?

## Discussion

11. What are the main conclusions of the research?
12. To whom do the results or findings apply? Can they be generalized to all people in all places, to certain subsets of people, or something else?
13. What are the strengths and limitations of the study?
14. What are areas for further investigation on this topic?

## Step 4: Paraphrasing a Research Article

Now paraphrase the main sections of the article in your own words. Keep each paraphrase to one or two sentences if possible. Use these paraphrases to write an article summary to use in your papers. Include an in-text citation (see Step 2) in the first sentence of your summary. As long as you continue to discuss the same study within the same paragraph without using other sources, it is not necessary to repeat the citation. Consult Chapter 8 of the *Publication Manual* for more on paraphrasing and citation level.

Introduction paraphrase:

Method paraphrase:

Results or Findings paraphrase:

Discussion paraphrase:

Article summary (with in-text citation in first sentence):

