

How to Write the Methods

This section is designed to tell readers in **5-6 paragraphs (~800 words or ~20-30%** of manuscript text) exactly what was done to achieve the objectives listed in the Introduction. Well-written Methods sections improve readers' ability to interpret results and assess the quality of the study and conclusions. It should **read like a recipe, so that anyone who reads the manuscript could reproduce your study**. Be sure to discuss study design, participant selection, and procedures using the following format:

- **First Paragraph** should describe the **study design** (e.g., prospective, retrospective, randomized controlled trial, cohort, case-control) and **setting**, including a description of the locations where study procedures were performed and study dates.
 - A systematic literature review was conducted of studies that ...
 - There are a number of instruments available for measuring the ...
 - A major advantage of X is that ... The benefit of this approach is that ...
 - The main disadvantage of the experimental method is that ...
 - Analysis was based on the conceptual framework proposed by Smith et al. (2002).
 - A X-study approach was used to gain a detailed understanding of...
- **Second and Third Paragraphs** should outline the methods used to **select study participants** (e.g., inclusion and exclusion criteria). Be sure to state that institutional review board approval was obtained (or waived, when applicable) and describe how participants were consented. Next, describe the specific study outcomes and major independent or predictor variables.
 - A random sample of patients with ... was recruited from ...
 - Of the initial cohort of 123 students, 66 were female and 57 male.
 - Prior to commencing the study, ethical clearance was sought from...
 - Two groups of subjects were interviewed, namely X and Y. The first group were ...
 - Criteria for selecting the subjects were as follows:
 - Five individuals were excluded from the study on the basis of ...
 - To assess whether and how Xs are produced and received, we measured ...
 - Descriptive data were generated for all variables.
- **Fourth and Final Paragraphs** should explain the **specific materials, equipment, or procedures** used to evaluate disease/condition or determine outcomes. Be sure to provide information on steps taken to reduce bias. This section should conclude by listing statistical methods and software (manufacturer and version) used to analyze the data. Be sure to also state the P value used for significance testing.
 - Statistical analysis was performed using SPSS software (version 20).
 - In particular, the analysis of X was problematic.
 - It was not possible to investigate the significant relationships of X and Y further because...
 - In observational studies, there is a potential for bias from ...
 - The responses relating to X were subjective and were therefore susceptible to recall bias.