Tips for Tables and Graphs Placement

Please…

Don’t sandwich a single line of text between two illustrations.

Don’t break a table in half with a page break

Don’t squeeze an illustration into a single column

Don’t center the figure caption
Figure Captions (continued)

• Please do not begin captions with:
  – “In this table…”
  – “In this graph…”
  – “This graph shows…”
  – “This table shows…”
How to Write a Results Section

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What is the *Content* of the Results Section?
What is the **Content** of the Results Section?

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Report the **results** of your experiments in **past tense**

Report **only meaningful data** (not all of it)

Report data in **figures or text** but not both (although all illustrations must be mentioned in the text)
What is the **Content** of the Results Section?

If it’s a long or complicated results section, consider **beginning** with a few sentences about the experiments to orient the reader and provide the reader the **scope** of the section.
Use **Subheads** to Break your Results Section into Logical Portions

**Use subheads to:**

- Provide *advance organization*.
- Allow readers to *skip* some sections or *zero in* on others.

**Should subheads in the Results correspond to those in Methods Section?**
Use **Subheads** to Break your Results Section into Logical Portions

Should subheads in the Results correspond to those in Methods Section?

The results section usually benefits from a different organization. e.g., Consider beginning with your most important findings.
What Differentiates Methods and Results Sections?
What **Differentiates** Methods and Results Sections?

**Methods** = HOW the data were accumulated

**Results** = WHAT data were accumulated
What **Differentiates** Results and Discussion Sections?
What **Differentiates** Results and Discussion Sections?

**Results** = Data PRESENTATION

**Discussion** = Data INTERPRETATION
Do you Have Obey These Rules?

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Do you Have Obey These Rules?

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No

You are authors. Sometimes a paper benefits from having these general rules broken.

e.g., sometimes methods reported in the methods section need to be justified by a result

e.g., sometimes you can reference another paper in the results section if something is particularly striking or odd about your results compared with someone else’s.
What are Some Qualities of a Well-Written Results Section?
What are Some Qualities of a Well-Written Results Section?

Results that focus on the paper’s hypotheses

Results that tell a story rather than report a catalogue of findings
What are Some **Qualities** of a Well-Written Results Section?

Methods and results sections that correspond, i.e., results without methods and vice versa

Results are presented in a **logical (not chronological)** order

**Strong opening sentences** to each subsection orient the reader to the data that follow.
What are Some Pitfalls of a Results Section?

Including methods and/or discussion in the results section.
   Overlap is acceptable in some circumstances.

Opening with weak or uninformative sentences.

Overstating the results (e.g., Figure 1. clearly shows…”)

Reporting irrelevant results
   Although it is sometimes useful to report experiments that didn’t work.

Omitting visual organizers (e.g., subheads).
Authors orient reader in first sentence.

First results is in second sentence.

This and subsequent sentences make declarative statements and refer to data in Figure 1 A - C.

Final statement on this page refers to unpublished data.

Zimmerman Example

Last sentence in this paragraph tells what the data indicate.

This is a legitimate result, not discussion.

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Zimmerman Example

Note orienting sentence at outset of subsection.

Note all the references to figures. This is typical of a results section.

Note transition of ideas in topic sentence of paragraph two, “To further extend our observations…”

Last sentence borders on discussion. Authors prerogative.

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Zimmerman Example

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Subheads are statements.
Orienting sentences are followed by declarative statements referring to figures.
Zimmerman Example

Don’t rely on subheads to inform topic sentences.

Bad form.

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Zimmerman Example

Authors state what their results
“suggest” …translate - “indicate.”

Try to reserve “suggest” for the discussion.

Authors say that other researchers “claim” something about Reaper.

This means they don’t agree.

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How to Decide What to Report?

Make your figures first to see how convincing your data are.

Your figures are the heart of your Results section.
Then Make a List of the Points You Want to Make

You’re forced to do this in a PowerPoint presentation
– e.g., one slide per point (even if the point is, “this didn’t work and I don’t know why.”).

You aren’t forced to do this on paper, hence some results sections ramble....
Do it Now

Make a list of the points you want to make so far.

These are likely to become subheadings in your results section.

(Some will be folded in to the same subsection though.)
Check Your List Again After the Results are Written...

Did you make your points?

Do the topic sentences focus on the points you want to make?

Do the data back them up?