

KNOW HOW TO CHOOSE BETWEEN TABLES, FIGURES, AND TEXT FOR YOUR DATA

Do you know when to use tables, figures, and text in your research paper?

What kind of data do you have to present?



Use tables when you need to present many precise numerical values and other specific data in a small space



Use figures when you need to present trends, patterns, and relationships across and between data sets



Use text when you don't have extensive or complex data to present and can convey information via text

What do you want readers to focus on?



Use tables when you want readers to focus on specific numerical values/data instead of a trend or pattern across the data set



Use figures when you want readers to focus on the general pattern across a data set instead of the exact data values (use graphs and data plots for this purpose)



Use text when you can get readers to focus on key information without using tables or figures

What is your purpose for presenting the data?



Use tables when you need to compare and contrast values or characteristics either among related items or between items that share several characteristics or variables



Use figures when you need to summarize research results (use schematic diagrams, images, photographs, and maps for this purpose)



Use text when putting your data into a table would mean creating a table with only two or fewer columns, i.e., when you are not presenting a large data set

What do you wish to demonstrate through the data?



Use tables when you want to demonstrate the presence or absence of specific characteristics or the effects of certain variables



Use figures when you want to visually present a sequence of events, procedures, geographic features, or physical characteristics (use schematic diagrams, images, photographs, and maps for this purpose)



Use text when you want to present data that is peripheral to the study or irrelevant to the main study findings