

How to read research!

Research is reported in a variety of ways, most commonly as a published article. The purpose of the article is to indicate clearly what the research has done, why it was done, and what it means. To do this effectively, researchers use a more or less standard format. (McMillian & Schumacher, 2001, p.43).

Parts of a research article

Keep in mind that some articles will contain all the parts, and other will contain only some:

- Abstract
- Introduction
- Statement of research problem
- Review of literature
- Statement of research hypotheses or questions
- Methodology (subjects, instruments, procedure)
- Results
- Discussion, implications, conclusions
- References

Abstracts:

Generally a paragraph that summarizes the article. It follows the author's name and is usually italicized or printed in type that is smaller than the rest of the article (McMillian & Schumacher, 2001, p.44).

Introduction:

First one or two paragraphs of the article, the introduction helps to put the study into context. This is often accomplished by quoting previous research in the general topic, citing leading researchers in the area, or developing the historical context of the study (McMillian & Schumacher, 2001, p.44).

Research Problem:

The research problem is a clear and succinct statement that indicates the purpose of the study (McMillian & Schumacher, 2001, p.44). **This is not always a separate section, the research problem can be**

in different locations in the article. It could appear in the introduction, after the literature review, or just before the methodology section.

Review of Literature:

In this section the author discusses earlier studies that have been done. This section can vary greatly in length, but should give a good background to the literature already published on the topic. Normally there will be many citations in this section.

Research Hypothesis or Question:

This is where the author will predict what they think is going to happen in the study, **not all articles state a research hypothesis.**

Methodology:

In this section the author describes the actual study. They may mention the subjects (the people who participated in the study).

They may also discuss the instrument used to collect the data and how the study was carried out. This section will vary from one article to another, some author's will give lots of details with difficult to understand statistics, while others will only give brief details.

Results:

The author tells you what the study showed, what the results were. You may find statistics and percentages in this section. There may also be charts and graphs to represent the results.

Discussion, Implications, & Conclusions:

This is where the author tells you what they think the results mean. They should relate the results back the original research problem or question.

References:

The article should contain proper references for all the works cited in the article. These can be a good source of information for further readings.

Tips for Reading

- ✓ Read the abstract first, to make sure the article is really appropriate for your paper or project
- ✓ Scan the article first to determine the length and find the different sections
- ✓ Read the sections (abstract, introduction, etc.) by themselves and take notes on the different sections
- ✓ If you need to take a break for a few minutes between reading the different sections.
- ✓ Reread the entire article and compare it to your notes, make any changes necessary
- ✓ To make sure you understand what you read, write your own abstract of the article.
- ✓ LEAVE YOURSELF ENOUGH TIME TO READ THE ARTICLES! THESE ARTICLES ARE LONG AND CONTAIN A LOT OF INFORMATION, YOU CAN'T READ THEM IN 20 MINUTES!!!!

References

McMillan, J. H., & Schumacher, S. (2001). *Research in education: A conceptual introduction* (2nd ed.). Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman.