

ACADEMIC COMMUNICATION INFO SHEET

Report Writing: Tables and figures APA (RW: TF)

The main purpose of tables and figures is to enhance the reader's understanding of the information in reports and essays; they may be used as evidence to support academic arguments in the text. They can be used to present complex information clearly and effectively. Tables and figures record the facts; but the writer interprets the trend. Information nearby explains how to make sense of the table/figure.

Learn about:

- the difference between tables and figures
- how to label and reference them
- how to embed tables and figures

See other **Info Sheets** about reports and labelling images.

A table contains information that is organised using columns and rows. **Figures** can be maps, charts, diagrams, drawings, graphs and photographs. The text of the report or essay is tightly intertwined with the table/figure to describe the trend. Tables and figures must be labeled and referenced.

Labelling figures and tables

Label with a number and a brief yet informative title. Use one series of numbers for tables and another series for figures.

Examples

- Table 1: Weekly profits
- Figure 1: Comparison of 2012 and 2013 profits

Refer to tables and figures in the text by their table or figure number; this helps the reader connect the text and the table/figure. Position all tables and figures as close to the relevant text as possible.

Examples

- Table 1 shows ...
- Results are shown in Figure 1.
- The results show ... (see Table 1)

Reference the work of others by showing the source of the table or figure or of the data that you have used to make it. If the table/figure is your own creation, reference accordingly using the word 'author'. Give full details of your source in the table or figure caption, giving the title of the source first, following by the author(s) and other publication details.

Example of table reference

"Hope and social support as resilience factors against psychological distress of mothers who care for children with chronic physical conditions," by T. V. Horton and J. L. Wallander, 2001, *Rehabilitation Psychology*, 46, p. 387.

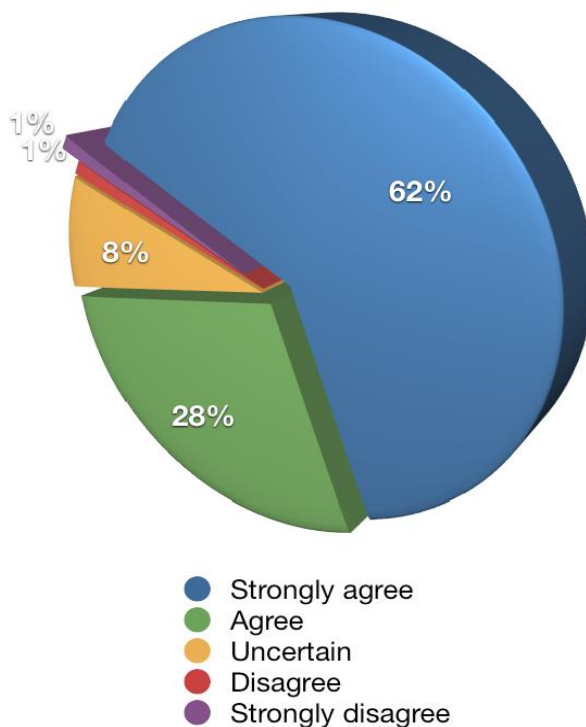
Example of figure reference follows in Figure 1

Sample figure (APA style)

Make specific reference to the figure (or table) in your paragraph. Use the figure or table number to be clear.

When asked about social media experiences, a large proportion of business owners stated that social media was important to their business (see Figure 1). Self-employed or small business owners mostly responded to the strongly agree option.

Place your figure or table immediately below the paragraph which refers to it.



Place your figure label (caption) immediately below and call it 'Figure'. Give its number. Use a full-stop to separate this and its informative title, which starts with a capital.

Include full bibliographic details of your source in the caption text, following the title. Then put the usual full details in the reference list.

Figure 1. Social media's importance in business marketing
From *How marketers are using social media to grow their businesses*, by M. Stelzner, 2011, retrieved from Social Media Examiner website: <http://www.socialmediaexaminer.com/social-media-marketing-industry-report-2011/>, p. 11.

Page number is necessary here as this figure came from this specific page in the source.

Notes

For a figure, the label and source go below.

For a table, the table number goes above the table, followed by the table title on the next line in italics. The source goes below the table.

The source information in both figure and table captions follows a slightly different format to the one used in the reference list. The title is given first, and quotation marks are used with article titles.

More info

Purdue Online Writing Lab gives further information about notes in tables
<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/19/>

APA's style blog <http://blog.apastyle.org/apastyle/2009/12/figure-construction-resisting-the-urge-to-obscure.html>