

## ACADEMIC COMMUNICATION INFO SHEET

### Report Writing: Tables and Figures Harvard (RW: TFH)

The main purpose of tables and figures is to **enhance the reader's understanding of the information** in reports and essays. Tables and figures record the facts; the writer selects from the facts to interpret the trend. Information nearby explains how to make sense of the table/figure. The text of the report or essay is tightly intertwined with the table/figure to describe the trend.

#### 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.

**A table** contains information that is organised using columns and rows. **Figures** can be maps, charts, diagrams, drawings, graphs and photographs.

These items may be used as evidence to support academic arguments in the text. They can be used to present complex information clearly and effectively.

They 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 even if you have adapted it. If the table/figure is your own creation, then reference accordingly using the word 'author'.

#### Examples:

Source: Kaufman (1998, p. 195)

Source: Adapted from Pearce (2012)

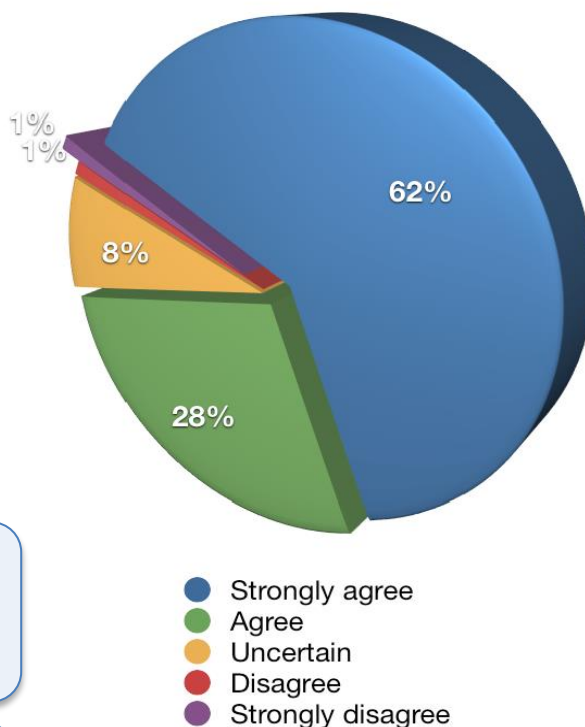
Source: Author

## Sample figure (Harvard 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.



Reference the figure in the caption text, following the word 'Source' and a colon. Then put the usual full details in the reference list.

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

Figure 1: Social media's importance in business marketing  
Source: Stelzner (2011, p. 11)

Page number is necessary as this figure came from this specific page in the *Social media marketing industry report*.

### Notes:

For a figure, the label and source go **below**.

For a table, the label goes **above** and the source goes **below**.

### More information:

University of New England Tables and Figures <http://www.une.edu.au/tlc/aso/aso-online/academic-writing/tables-figures.php>

Writing Center Tables and Figures <http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/figures-and-charts/>

Monash University Tables and Figures <http://monash.edu/lls/llonline/writing/science/process/2.1.xml>