How to read a Research article

Components of a Research Article

Typically, a research article consists of the following sections: an abstract, introduction, literature review, methods, results, discussion and will normally end with a reference/bibliography page. Research articles are often times organized so the information goes from general to specific, then back to general again.

1. Abstract
2. Introduction
3. Literature Review
4. Methods/Results
5. Conclusion

A Survey of Teen Museum Education Participants and their Parents

Jenny Hardy and Byra Babish

Department of Art, University of Memphis, Memphis, Tennessee, USA

ABSTRACT

In this article, we explore a museum program for teens located in an urban environment. The purpose of this article is to highlight the importance of developing and maintaining museum education experiences, including modern museum learning. The study involved the collection of data from a survey of parents of teen museum participants. The results of this study indicate that parents believe that museum education experiences have a positive impact on their children.

REFERENCES


The abstract is a single-paragraph summary of the paper’s purpose, main points, method, findings, and conclusions. It is usually found at the beginning of the article.
The introduction establishes any relevant background information the audience needs to know before reading the rest of the paper. The introduction also includes the thesis statement, which defines the point of the paper. The thesis statement can include the writer’s hypothesis and/or research questions regarding the topic.

The literature review tends to be a difficult area to read, however, it is the most helpful part when understanding the purpose of the research question.

A literature review includes previous researchers that have done research on the same topic and it includes a synthesis of their findings all while the new researcher’s idea is being researched. The past research should be from credible sources, such as academic books and peer-reviewed journal articles.

This will also tell you that the author has done extensive research on their topic and can be used as a credible source as well!

This is the section where the author describes how the research was conducted and what the methodology is.

The methodology is defined as a system of methods used in a particular area of study. Some common methodologies are quantitative research and qualitative research.

Understanding what kind of methodology used will help interpret the data found.

When reading this section, ask yourself these questions:

1. How was the study conducted? (aka, methodology!)
2. Who were the participants?
3. What are the data sources?
4. What were the key findings?
Conclusion / Discussion

During the introduction, the researcher asked a question that they had about their topic. In the conclusion / discussion section, the researcher discusses whether their initial question was answered or not. They usually discuss the results of their data or methods and how it connects with previous research from the literature review. Researchers can also mention future research areas for this topic.

Overall

Researchers look for specific data to test and find evidence to support an answer relating to their question / topic. Often times, this topic urges them to ask specific questions and to find data that answer these questions. It allows for readers to understand why their question is worth asking and how its answer helps us understand a bigger issue in a new perspective.

References

