

## Tenses typically used in different sections of research reports.

### Introduction section

- Present simple- to state accepted truths or facts

*A plug-in hybrid electric vehicle (PHEV) **combines** the propulsion capabilities of a traditional combustion engine with an electric motor.*

- Present continuous- to describe current trends and changes

*Nanocrystalline oxide films **are attracting** widespread interest in fields such as ...*

- Present perfect- to refer to existing research or to the wider context framing the research question

*Recent research efforts **have** largely **focused** on chemical transformations.*

- Past Simple- to refer to previous research (single studies)

*The causes of airport delays **were investigated** by Huang (2007).*

- Present perfect -to indicate a gap in the research

*However, **there has been** relatively little analysis of ..*

- Present simple- to describe the aim and structure of the paper

*This paper **examines** several aspects of ...*

- Past tense- to refer to your own study and its results

*The study **was carried out** to investigate*

### Method section

- Present simple passive – to describe what is **normally** done (**standard procedure**)

*A flexible section **is inserted** in the pipe (this is how it's usually done)*

Because the passive form is used, the reader can only distinguish standard procedure from your procedure by looking at tense usage thus:

- Past simple passive- to describe what **you did** yourself.

*A flexible section **was inserted** in the pipe (**my procedure**)*

*Samples for gas analysis **were collected** using the method described by Brown (1999), which **uses** a pneumatic air sampling pump. (**what you did vs. Brown's method**)*

*The tests **were conducted** over ten weeks.*

*Viscosity **was measured** at half-hourly intervals.*

### Result section

- Past tense to detail the results that you obtained

*As Table 1 shows, men **were found** to be more likely to hold higher positions within the firm.*

*Seventy-three percent of the participants **reported** that they used the internet for professional purposes*

- Present simple to refer to tables and figures

*Table 3 **provides** additional information on the distribution of firms.*

*The results obtained from the preliminary analysis of X **are presented** in Table 1.*

### Discussion section

- Past tense- to focus on the research objectives

*The purpose of the current research **was** to develop...*

- Present Perfect – to focus on what the article has achieved up to now

*This paper/ report/ article **has presented** the results of an investigation into...*

- Past tense- to refer to findings

*All participants **showed** a significant increase in ...*

- Present tense – to discuss relevance and implications

*These findings **support** a growing body of research indicating that ...*