

Academic Phrasebank

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Introducing work

There are many ways to introduce an academic essay or short paper. Most academic writers, however, appear to do one or more of the following in their introductions:

- establish the context, background and/or importance of the topic
- indicate an issue, problem, or controversy in the field of study
- define the topic or key terms
- state of the purpose of the essay/writing
- provide an overview of the coverage and/or structure of the writing

Introductions to research articles and dissertations tend to be relatively short but quite complex. Some of the more common moves include:

- establishing the context, background and/or importance of the topic
- giving a brief synopsis of the relevant literature
- indicating a problem, controversy or a knowledge gap in the field of study
- establishing the desirability of the research
- listing the research questions or hypotheses
- providing a synopsis of the research method(s)
- explaining the significance or value of the study
- defining certain key terms
- providing an overview of the dissertation or report structure
- explaining reasons for the writer's personal interest in the topic

Examples of phrases which are commonly employed to realise these functions are listed below. Note that there may be a certain amount of overlap between some of the categories under which the phrases are listed.

Establishing the importance of the topic for the world or society

X is fundamental to ...

X has a pivotal role in ...

X is frequently prescribed for ...

X is fast becoming a key instrument in ...

X plays a vital role in the metabolism of ...

X plays a critical role in the maintenance of ...

Xs have emerged as powerful platforms for ...

X is essential for a wide range of technologies.

X can play an important role in addressing the issue of ...
Xs are the most potent anti-inflammatory agents known.
There is evidence that X plays a crucial role in regulating ...
X is a common condition which has considerable impact on ...
In the new global economy, X has become a central issue for ...
Evidence suggests that X is among the most important factors for ...
X is important for a wide range of scientific and industrial processes.
Xs are one of the most widely used groups of antibacterial agents and ...
There is a growing body of literature that recognises the importance of ...
X is an important component in the climate system, and plays a key role in Y.
In the history of development economics, X has been thought of as a key factor in ...
Xs are one of the most widely used groups of Y and have been extensively used for ...

Establishing the importance of the topic for the discipline

A key aspect of X is ...
X is of interest because ...
X is a classic problem in ...
A primary concern of X is ...
X is a dominant feature of ...
X is an important aspect of ...
X is a fundamental property of ...
The concepts of X and Y are central to ...
X is at the heart of our understanding of ...
Investigating X is a continuing concern within ...
X is a major area of interest within the field of ...
X has been studied by many researchers using ...
X has been an object of research since the 1960s.
X has been the subject of many classic studies in ...
X has been instrumental in our understanding of ...
The theory of X provides a useful account of how ...
Central to the entire discipline of X is the concept of ...
X is an increasingly important area in applied linguistics.
The issue of X has received considerable critical attention.
X has long been a question of great interest in a wide range of fields.

Establishing the importance of the topic (time frame given)

Recently, there has been renewed interest in ...
Traditionally, Xs have subscribed to the belief that ...
One of the most important events of the 1970s was ...
In recent years, there has been an increasing interest in ...
Recent developments in X have heightened the need for ...
The last two decades have seen a growing trend towards ...
Recently, researchers have shown an increased interest in ...
Over the past century, there has been a dramatic increase in ...
Recent trends in X have led to a proliferation of studies that ...
X proved an important literary genre in the early Y community.
The past decade has seen the rapid development of X in many ...
Since it was reported in 2005, X has been attracting a lot of interest.

Recently, a considerable literature has grown up around the theme of ...
Recent developments in the field of X have led to a renewed interest in ...
The past thirty years have seen increasingly rapid advances in the field of ...
The changes experienced by X over the past decade remain unprecedented.
In light of recent events in X, it is becoming extremely difficult to ignore the existence of ...

Synopsis of literature

Recent evidence suggests that ...
Previous studies have reported ...
Several studies have documented ...
Studies of X show the importance of ...
Several attempts have been made to ...
A number of researchers have reported ...
Previous research comparing X and Y has found ...
Existing research recognizes the critical role played by ...
Recently investigators have examined the effects of X on Y.
Surveys such as that conducted by Smith (1988) showed that ...
Factors found to be influencing X have been explored in several studies.
A considerable amount of literature has been published on X. These studies ...
In the past two decades, a number of researchers have sought to determine ...
The first serious discussions and analyses of X emerged during the 1970s with ...
There have been a number of longitudinal studies involving X that have reported ...
Xs were reported in the first studies of Y (e.g., Smith, 1977; Smith and Patel, 1977).
What we know about X is largely based upon empirical studies that investigate how ...
Smith (1984: 217) shows how, in the past, research into X was mainly concerned with ...

Highlighting a problem

One of the main obstacles ...
One of the greatest challenges ...
A key issue is the safe disposal of ...
The main disadvantage of X is that ...
X is associated with increased risk of ...
X is a common disorder characterised by ...
It is now well established that X can impair ...
X is a common, chronic disease of childhood.
X has led to the declines in the populations of ...
X is a growing public health concern worldwide.
X is one of the most frequently stated problems with ...
The main challenge faced by many experiments is the ...
Lack of X has existed as a health problem for many years.
X is a major public health problem, and the main cause of ...
Xs are one of the most rapidly declining groups of insects in ...
X is the leading cause of death in western-industrialised countries.
Despite its long clinical success, X has a number of problems in use.
Exposure to X has been shown to be related to adverse effects in ...
There is increasing concern that some Xs are being disadvantaged ...
There is an urgent need to address the safety problems caused by ...

However,	X may cause ... X is limited by ... X suffers from ... X is too expensive to be used for ... X has accentuated the problem of ... the performance of X is limited by ... X could be a contributing factor to ... the synthesis of X remains a major challenge X can be extremely harmful to human beings research has consistently shown that X lacks ... a major problem with this kind of application is ... the determination of X is technically challenging current methods of X have proven to be unreliable these rapid changes are having a serious effect on ... X can be adversely affected under certain conditions observations have indicated a serious decline in the population of ...
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Highlighting a controversy in the field of study

A much debated question is whether ...
One major issue in early X research concerned ...
To date there has been little agreement on what ...
The issue has grown in importance in light of recent ...
In the literature on X, the relative importance of Y is debated.
One observer has already drawn attention to the paradox in ...
Questions have been raised about the use of animal subjects in ...
In many Xs, a debate is taking place between Ys and Zs concerning ...
Debate continues about the best strategies for the management of ...
This concept has recently been challenged by X studies demonstrating ...
The debate about X has gained fresh prominence with many arguing that ...
Scholars have long debated the impact of X on the creation and diffusion of ...
More recently, literature has emerged that offers contradictory findings about ...
One of the most significant current discussions in legal and moral philosophy is ...
One major theoretical issue that has dominated the field for many years concerns ...
The controversy about scientific evidence for X has raged unabated for over a century.
The issue of X has been a controversial and much disputed subject within the field of ...
The causes of X have been the subject of intense debate within the scientific community.
In the literature on X, the relative importance of Y has been subject to considerable discussion.

General reference to previous research or scholarship: highlighting paucity of research

There is little published data on ...
No previous study has investigated X .
The use of X has not been investigated.
There has been no detailed investigation of ...
There has been little quantitative analysis of ...
Data about the efficacy and safety of X are limited.
Up to now, far too little attention has been paid to ...
A search of the literature revealed few studies which ...
The impact of X on Y is understudied, particularly for ...

Few studies have investigated X in any systematic way ...
 So far, very little attention has been paid to the role of X
 So far, however, there has been little discussion about ...
 In addition, no research has been found that surveyed ...
 Surprisingly, the effects of X have not been closely examined.
 In contrast to X, there is much less information about effects of ...
 A systematic understanding of how X contributes to Y is still lacking.
 Despite the importance of X, there remains a paucity of evidence on ...
 There have been no controlled studies which compare differences in ...
 To date, the problem has received scant attention in the research literature
 To date, there are few studies that have investigated the association between ...

While Whilst Although	some research has been carried out on X,	no single study exists which ... no studies have been found which ... no controlled studies have been reported only two studies have attempted to investigate ... there have been few empirical investigations into ... there is still very little scientific understanding of ... the mechanism by which ... has not been established
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Highlighting inadequacies of previous studies

Previous studies of X have not dealt with ...
 Researchers have not treated X in much detail.
 Such expositions are unsatisfactory because they ...
 Most studies in the field of X have only focused on ...
 Such approaches, however, have failed to address ...
 Previous published studies are limited to local surveys.
 Half of the studies evaluated failed to specify whether ...
 The research to date has tended to focus on X rather than Y.
 Previously published studies on the effect of X are not consistent.
 Smith's analysis does not take account of ..., nor does she examine ...
 The existing accounts fail to resolve the contradiction between X and Y.
 Most studies in X have only been carried out in a small number of areas.
 However, much of the research up to now has been descriptive in nature ...
 The generalisability of much published research on this issue is problematic.
 Research on the subject has been mostly restricted to limited comparisons of ...
 However, few writers have been able to draw on any systematic research into ...
 Short-term studies such as these do not necessarily show subtle changes over time ...
 Although extensive research has been carried out on X, no single study exists which ...
 However, these results were based upon data from over 30 years ago and it is unclear if ...
 The experimental data are rather controversial, and there is no general agreement about ...

Highlighting a knowledge gap in the field of study

Very little is known about X in ...
 ... much less is known about X
 It is still not known whether ...
 The nature of X remains unclear.
 What is not yet clear is the impact of X on ...

The response of X to Y is not fully understood.
 Causal factors leading to X remain speculative.
 To date, there has been no reliable evidence that ...
 The neurobiological basis of this X is poorly understood.
 Little is known about X and it is not clear what factors ...
 Much uncertainty still exists about the relationship between ...
 To date, studies investigating X have produced equivocal results.
 The evidence that X and Y are associated with Z is weak and inconclusive.
 This indicates a need to understand the various perceptions of X that exist among ...
 Some studies have shown the beneficial effects of ..., but others showed a deterioration in ...

However,	very little is known about X in... few studies have investigated ... the nature of X remains unclear much less is known about how ... the use of X has not been investigated far too little attention has been paid to ... the behaviour of X has not yet been investigated the evidence for this relationship is inconclusive ... much uncertainty still exists about the relation between ... there have been no controlled studies which compare differences in ...
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Apart from Smith (2014), there is a general lack of research in ...
 Despite this, very few studies have investigated the impact of X on ...
 Despite the importance of X, there remains a paucity of evidence on ...
 Several studies have produced estimates of X (Smith, 2002; Jones, 2003), but there is still insufficient data for ...

Indicating the focus, aim, argument of a short paper

In this paper, I argue that ...
 This paper attempts to show that ...
 The central thesis of this paper is that ...
 In the pages that follow, it will be argued that ...
 In this essay, I attempt to defend the view that ...
 The aim of this essay is to explore the relationship between ...
 The purpose of this paper is to review recent research into the ...

<p>This paper</p>	<p> argues that ... gives an account of ... discusses the case of ... analyses the impact of ... attempts to show that ... contests the claim that ... provides an overview of ... reviews the evidence for ... reports on a study which ... traces the development of ... explores the ways in which ... assesses the significance of ... highlights the importance of ... considers the implications of ... critically examines the view that ... proposes a new methodology for ... examines the relationship between ... compares the different ways in which ... investigates the factors that determine ... describes the design and implementation of ... </p>
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Stating the purpose of research

The specific objective of this study was to ...
 An objective of this study was to investigate ...
 This thesis will examine the way in which the ...
 This study set out to investigate the usefulness of ...
 This dissertation seeks to explain the development of ...
 This case study seeks to examine the changing nature of ...
 The objectives of this research are to determine whether ...
 This prospective study was designed to investigate the use of ...
 This research examines the emerging role of X in the context of ...
 This study systematically reviews the data for..., aiming to provide ...
 Drawing upon two strands of research into X, this study attempts to ...
 This thesis intends to determine the extent to which ... and whether ...
 This dissertation aims to unravel some of the mysteries surrounding ...
 This study therefore set out to assess the effect of X ..., and the effect of ...
 The main aim of this study is to investigate the differences between X and Y.
 Part of the aim of this project is to develop software that is compatible with ...
 There are two primary aims of this study: 1. To investigate ... 2. To ascertain ...
 This study seeks to obtain data which will help to address these research gaps.
 One purpose of this study was to assess the extent to which these factors were ...
 The purpose of this investigation is to explore the relationship between X and Y.

Synopsis of the research design, method, source(s) of data

Data for this study were collected using ...
 Five works will be examined, all of which ...
 This investigation takes the form of a case-study of the ...
 This study was exploratory and interpretative in nature.
 This study uses a qualitative case study approach to investigate ...

The research data in this thesis is drawn from four main sources: ...
The approach to empirical research adopted for this study was one of ...
This dissertation follows a case-study design, with in-depth analysis of ...
By employing qualitative modes of enquiry, I attempt to illuminate the ...
Qualitative and quantitative research designs were adopted to provide ...
Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used in this investigation.
A holistic approach is utilised, integrating X, Y and Z material to establish ...
The study was conducted in the form of a survey, with data being gathered via ...
The methodological approach taken in this study is a mixed methodology based on ...
A combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches was used in the data analysis.

Indicating significance

This research sheds new light on ...
This study provides new insights into ...
The study offers some important insights into ...
The present study fills a gap in the literature by ...
Understanding the link between X and Y will help ...
This is the first study to undertake a longitudinal analysis of ...
The present research explores, for the first time, the effects of ...
The findings should make an important contribution to the field of
This study provides an exciting opportunity to advance our knowledge of ...
This study aims to contribute to this growing area of research by exploring ...
This project provided an important opportunity to advance the understanding of ...
Therefore, this study makes a major contribution to research on X by demonstrating ...
There are several important areas where this study makes an original contribution to ...

Indicating limitations

The thesis does not engage with ...
This study is unable to encompass the entire ...
It is beyond the scope of this study to examine the ...
A full discussion of X lies beyond the scope of this study.
The reader should bear in mind that the study is based on ...
Another potential problem is that the scope of my thesis may be too broad.
Due to practical constraints, this paper cannot provide a comprehensive review of...

Giving reasons for personal Interest*

I became interested in Xs after reading ...
I have worked closely with X for many years and ...
My personal experience of X has prompted this research.
My main reason for choosing this topic is personal interest.
It is my experience of working with X that has driven this research.
This project was conceived during my time working for X. As a medical advisor, I witnessed ...

* sometimes found in the humanities, and the applied human sciences

Outlining the structure

This paper begins by ... It will then go on to ...

The first section of this paper will examine...

My thesis is composed of four themed chapters.

The essay has been organised in the following way.

The remaining part of the paper proceeds as follows: ...

The main issues addressed in this paper are: a), b and c).

This paper first gives a brief overview of the recent history of X.

This paper has been divided into four parts. The first part deals with ...

The overall structure of the study takes the form of six chapters, including ...

Chapter Two begins by laying out the theoretical dimensions of the research, and looks at how ...

The third chapter is concerned with the methodology used for this study.

The fourth section presents the findings of the research, focusing on the three key themes that ...

Chapter 6 analyses the results of interviews and focus group discussions undertaken during ...

Explaining Keywords (refer to *Defining Terms*)

Throughout this paper, the term X will refer to ...

According to Smith (2002), X can be defined as follows: ‘ ... ’

In this article, the abbreviation XYZ will be used to refer to ...

Throughout this dissertation, the term X will be used to refer to ...

The term X is a relatively new name for ..., commonly referred to as ...

While a variety of definitions of the term X have been suggested, this paper will use the definition first suggested by Smith (1968) who saw it as ...

Referring to Sources

One of the distinguishing features of academic writing is that it is informed by what is already known, what work has been done before, and/or what ideas and models have already been developed. Thus, academic writers frequently make reference to external sources. In some cases, where the individual author is important, the author's name will be the main subject of the sentence; in other cases, the source may only be mentioned in brackets (....) or via a number notation system (e.g. footnotes and endnotes). The 'author as subject' style is less common in the empirical disciplines (sciences) and more commonly used in the humanities. The verbs and verb phrases typically used for referring to sources are listed below. Note that different referencing systems are used in different disciplines. In the examples given here, the Harvard in-text referencing system has been used.

The Literature Review: it is the purpose of the Literature Review section of a paper or dissertation to show the reader, in a systematic way, what is already known about the research topic as a whole, and to outline the key ideas and theories that help us to understand this (refer to [Being Critical](#)). As well as being systematic, the review should be evaluative and critical of the studies or ideas which are relevant to the current work. For example, you may think a particular study did not investigate some important aspect of the area you are researching, that the authors failed to notice a weakness in their methods, or that their conclusion is not well-supported.

A note on verb tenses: For general reference to the literature, the present perfect tense (have/has + verb + ed) tends to be used. For reference to specific studies carried out in the past, the simple past tense is most commonly used. This is always the case where a specific date or time in the past constitutes a part of the sentence. When referring to the words or ideas of writers, the present tense is often used if the ideas are still relevant, even if the author is no longer alive. The examples given below reflect these general patterns.

General descriptions of the relevant literature

Research into X has a long history.

The literature has emphasized the importance of ...

Different theories exist in the literature regarding ...

More recent attention has focused on the provision of ...

There are relatively few historical studies in the area of ...

A great deal of previous research into X has focused on ...

A large and growing body of literature has investigated ...

Much of the current literature on X pays particular attention to ...

For many years, this phenomenon was surprisingly neglected by ...

There is a large volume of published studies describing the role of ...

Over the past decade, most research in X has emphasized the use of ...

In recent years, there has been an increasing amount of literature on ...

The generalisability of much published research on this issue is problematic.

During the past 30 years, much more information has become available on ...

A considerable amount of literature has been published on X. These studies ...

The first serious discussions and analyses of X emerged during the 1970s with ...

Historically, research investigating the factors associated with X has focused on ...

What we know about X is largely based upon empirical studies that investigate how ...

Reference to previous research or scholarship: normally more than one author

Several recent studies investigating X have been carried out on ...
Surveys such as that conducted by Smith (1988) have shown that ...
Traditionally, it has been argued that ... (e.g. Smith, 1960; O'Brien, 1972).
Early examples of research into X include ... (Smith, 1982; O'Brien, 1984).
Twenty cohort study analyses have examined the relationship between ...
Recent evidence suggests that ... (Smith, 1996; Jones, 1999; Johnson, 2001).
Several biographies of Brown have been published. Smith (2013) presents ...
A number of authors have considered the effects of ... (Smith, 2003; Jones, 2004).
Many historians have argued that ... (e.g. Jones, 1987; Johnson, 1990; Smith, 1994).
There is a consensus among social scientists that ... (e.g. Jones, 1987; Johnson, 1990; ...
Recently, in vitro studies have shown that X can ... (Patel et al., 1997; Jones et al., 1998).
Data from several sources have identified the increased X and Y associated with obesity.
At least 120 case-control studies worldwide have examined the relationship between ...
It has been demonstrated that a high intake of X results in damage to ... (Smith, 1998; ...).
In recent years, a few authors have begun to ... (Smith, 1996; Jones, 1999; Johnson, 2001).
Numerous studies have attempted to explain ... (for example, Smith, 1996; Kelly, 1998; ...).
Previous research findings into X have been inconsistent and contradictory (Smith, 1996; ...).

To date, Thus far, Up to now,	several studies previous studies a number of studies	have	used ... found ... reported ... shown that... indicated that ... linked X with Y suggested that ... demonstrated that ... tested the efficacy of ... investigated the effects of... begun to examine the use of ... confirmed the effectiveness of ... used longitudinal data to examine ... examined the association between ... attempted to evaluate the impact of ... revealed a correlation between X and Y analysed the accuracy and precision of ... explored the relationships between X and Y highlighted factors that are associated with ...
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It has been suggested that levels of X are independent of the size of the Y (Smith *et al.*, 1995).
It has conclusively been shown that X and Y increase Z (Smith *et al.*, 1999; Jones, 2001 ...).
It has been demonstrated that a high intake of X results in damage to ... (Smith, 1998; ...).

Reference to current state of knowledge

X is a principal determining factor of Y (Smith, 2005; Jones, 2013).
X is one of the most intense reactions following CHD (Lane, 2003).
There is an unambiguous relationship between X and Y (Rao, 1998).
X is significantly reduced during the first months of ... (Smith, 2000; Jones, 2006).

X has been found to oppose the anti-inflammatory actions of Y on Z (Alourfi, 2004).
 GM varieties of maize are able to cross-pollinate with non-GM varieties (Smith, 1998; O'Brien, ...
 A relationship exists between an individual's working memory and their ability to ... (Jones, 2002).

Reference to single investigations in the past: researcher(s) as sentence subject

Smith (1999)	showed that reducing X to 190°C decreased ... (see Figure 2) demonstrated that when the maximum temperature is exceeded ... found that as levels of literacy and education of the population rise ...
Jones et al. (2001)	compared the rate of ... labelled these subsets as ... measured both components of the ... used a survey to assess the various ... identified parents of disabled children as ... set up a series of virtual experiments using ... examined the flow of international students ... carried out a number of investigations into the ... studied the effects of X on unprotected nerve cells. analysed the data from 72 countries and concluded that ... interviewed 250 undergraduate students using semi-structured ... performed a similar series of experiments in the 1960s to show that ... reviewed the literature from the period and found little evidence for this ... conducted a series of trials in which he mixed X with different quantities of ... investigated the differential impact of formal and non-formal education on ...

Reference to single investigations or publications in the past: time frame prominent

In 1959, a seminal article was published entitled ...
 In 1889, Brown performed a bilateral ablation of the ...
 In 1859, the publication of X had a major impact on ...
 In 1965, Jones published his major historic survey of ...
 In 1975, Smith et al. published a paper in which they described ...
 In 1984, Jones et al. made several amino acid esters of X and evaluated them as ...
 In 1981, Smith and co-workers demonstrated that X induced in vitro resistance to ...
 In 1990, Patel et al. demonstrated that replacement of H₂O with heavy water led to ...
 In 1990, Al-Masry et al. reported a new and convenient synthetic procedure to obtain ...

Thirty years later, Smith (1974) reported three cases of X which ...
 In the 1950s, Gunnar Myrdal pointed to some of the ways in which ...
 Following World War 1, Fleming actively searched for anti-bacterial agents.
 Almost 20 years ago, Jones (1985) formulated his X theory, centred around ...

Reference to single investigations in the past: investigation prominent

A seminal study in this area is the work of ...
 One study by Smith (2014) examined the trend in ...
 A recent study by Smith and Jones (2012) involved ...
 A recent systematic literature review concluded that ...

A longitudinal study of X by Smith (2012) reports that ...
 Preliminary work on X was undertaken by Abdul Karim (1992).
 A key study comparing X and Y is that of Smith (2010), in which ...
 The first systematic study of X was reported by Patel et al. in 1986.
 Detailed examination of X by Smith and Patel (1961) showed that ...
 Analysis of the genes involved in X was first carried out by Smith et al. (1983).
 A significant analysis and discussion on the subject was presented by Smith (1988).
 The study of the structural behaviour of X was first carried out by Rao et al. (1986).
 A small scale study by Smith (2012) reached different conclusions, finding no increase in ...
 The study by Jones (1990) offers probably the most comprehensive empirical analysis of ...

Smith's comparative study (2012) found that ...
 Brown's (1992) model of X assumes three main ...
 Smith's cross-country analysis (2012) showed that ...

In an analysis of X, Smith *et al.* (2012) found ...
 In a follow-up study, Smith *et al.* (2009) found that ...
 In an investigation into X, Smith et al. (2012) found ...
 In a study conducted by Smith (1978), it was shown that ...
 In another major study, Zhao (1974) found that just over half of the ...
 In a study which set out to determine X, Smith (2012) found that ...
 In a randomised controlled study of X, Smith (2012) reported that ...
 In a large longitudinal study, Smith et al. (2012) investigated the incidence of X in Y.
 In one well-known recent experiment, limits on X were found to be ... (Al-Masry, 2013)

Reference to single investigations in the past: research topic as main focus

To determine the effects of X, Zhao *et al.* (2005) compared ...
 To better understand the mechanisms of X and its effects, Al-Masry (2013) analysed ...
 X was originally isolated from Y in a soil sample from ... (Wang *et al.*, 1952).
 The electronic spectroscopy of X was first studied by Smith and Jones in 1970
 X formed the central focus of a study by Smith (2002) in which the author found ...
 X was first demonstrated experimentally by Pavlov (Smith, 2002). In his seminal study ...
 The acid-catalyzed condensation reaction between X and Y was first reported by Smith in 1872
 The way in which the X gene is regulated was studied extensively by Ho and colleagues (Ho *et al.* 1995 and 1998).

Reference to what other writers do in their text: author as subject

In Chapter 2, Smith provides us with a number of important ...
 In the subsequent chapter, Smith examines the extent to which ...
 By drawing on the concept of X, Smith has been able to show that ...
 Some analysts (e.g. Carnoy, 2002) have attempted to draw fine distinctions between ...
 Drawing on an extensive range of sources, the authors set out the different ways in which ...
 Other authors (see Harbison, 2003; Kaplan, 2004) question the usefulness of such an approach.

Smith (2000)

identifies X, Y, and Z as the major causes of ...
 draws on an extensive range of sources to assess ...

	<p>highlights the need to break the link between X and Y.</p> <p>uses examples of these various techniques as evidence that ...</p> <p>mentions the special situation of Singapore as an example of ...</p> <p>questions whether mainstream schools are the best environment for ...</p> <p>draws our attention to distinctive categories of X often observed in ...</p> <p>considers whether countries work well on cross-border issues such as ...</p> <p>discusses the challenges and strategies for facilitating and promoting ...</p> <p>provides in-depth analysis of the work of Aristotle showing its relevance to ...</p> <p>defines evidence based medicine as the conscious, explicit and judicious use of ...</p> <p>lists three reasons why the English language has become so dominant. These are: ...</p> <p>traces the development of Japanese history and philosophy during the 19th century.</p>
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<p>In her review of ...,</p> <p>In her major study,</p> <p>In her analysis of ...,</p> <p>In her case study of ...,</p> <p>In her introduction to ...,</p> <p>In her seminal article,</p> <p>In her classic critique of ...,</p> <p>In her interesting analysis of ...,</p>	<p>Smith (2012) identifies five characteristics of ...</p>
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Reference to another writer's ideas or position (author as subject)

According to Smith (2003), preventative medicine is far more cost effective, and therefore ...

As noted by Smith (2003) X is far more cost effective, and therefore ...

Smith (2013)	<p>points out</p> <p>argues maintains</p> <p>claims</p> <p>concludes</p> <p>suggests</p>	that	preventative medicine is far more cost effective, and therefore better adapted to the developing world.
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Smith (2013)	<p>argues for</p> <p>offers</p> <p>proposes</p> <p>suggests</p>	an explanatory theory for each type of irrational belief.
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Synthesising sources

Similarly, Nicoladis (2006) found that X ...
In the same vein, Smith (1994) in his book XYZ notes ...
This view is supported by Jones (2000) who writes that ...
Smith argues that her data support O'Brien's (1988) view that ...
Al-Masry's (1986) work on X is complemented by Smith's (2009) study of ...
Almost every paper that has been written on X includes a section relating to ...

Unlike Smith, Jones (2013) argues that ...
In contrast to Smith, Jones (2013) argues that ...
A broader perspective has been adopted by Smith (2013) who argues that ...
Conversely, Wang (2010) reported no significant difference in mortality between X and Y.

Smith argues that ... Al-Masry (2003) sees X as ...	Similarly, Jones (2013) asserts that ... Likewise, Wang (2012) holds the view that ...
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Some writers (e.g. Smith, 2002) have attempted to draw fine distinctions between ... Some authors have mainly been interested in questions concerning X and Y (Smith, 2001; Jones ... Much of the available literature on X deals with the question of ...	Others (see Jones, 2003; Brown, 2004) question the usefulness of ... Others have highlighted the relevance of ... But Smith (2008) is much more concerned with ...
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Zhao (2002) notes that ... Smith (2013) found that X accounted for 30% of Y.	However, Jennings' (2010) study of Y found no link between ... Other researchers, however, who have looked at X, have found ... Jones (2010), for example, ...
Smith (2010) presents an X account, break While Smith (2008) focusses on X,	whilst Jones (2011) ... break Jones (2009) is more concerned with ...

Some ways of introducing quotations

Commenting on X, Smith (2003) argues: '... ...'
As Carnoy (2004: 215) states: 'there are many good reasons to be sceptical'.
As Smith argues: 'In the past, the purpose of education was to ...' (Smith, 2000:150).

In the final part of the *Theses on Feuerbach*, Marx writes: ‘Philosophers have hitherto only ...’
Sachs concludes: ‘The idea of development stands today like a ruin in ...’ (Sachs, 1992a: 156).

As Smith (2013: 320)

notes: ‘ ’
argues ‘ ’
writes: ‘ ’
observes: ‘ ’
points out: ‘ ’
reminds us: ‘ ’

Summarising the review or parts of the review

Together, these studies indicate that ...

Overall, these studies highlight the need for ...

Considering all of this evidence, it seems that ...

Collectively, these studies outline a critical role for...

The evidence presented in this section suggests that ...

The studies presented thus far provide evidence that ...

Overall, there seems to be some evidence to indicate that ...

Together these studies provide important insights into the ...

All of the studies reviewed here support the hypothesis that ...

Two important themes emerge from the studies discussed so far:

In view of all that has been mentioned so far, one may suppose that ...

Describing Methods

In the Methods section of a dissertation or research article, writers give an account of how they carried out their research. The Methods section should be clear and detailed enough for another experienced person to repeat the research and reproduce the results. Where the methods chosen are new, unfamiliar or perhaps even controversial, or where the intended audience is from many disciplines, the Methods section will tend to be much more extensive. Typical stretches of text found in this section of a research article or dissertation along with examples of the kind of language used for these are listed below. Note that for most of the functional categories in this section, the verbs are written in the simple past tense.

Describing previously used methods

Many historians have utilized X to measure ...
Traditionally, X has been assessed by measuring ...
X is the main non-invasive method used to determine ...
Different authors have measured X in a variety of ways.
Previous studies have based their criteria for selection on ...
Recent advances in X methods have facilitated investigation of ...
Recently, simpler and more rapid tests of X have been developed.
In most recent studies, X has been measured in four different ways.
The use of qualitative case studies is a well-established approach in ...
Case studies have been long established in X to present detailed analysis of ...
This test is widely available and has been used in many investigational studies.
To date, various methods have been developed and introduced to measure X.
In recent years, two different approaches have attempted to account for the ...
A variety of methods are used to assess X. Each has its advantages and drawbacks.

Giving reasons why a particular method was adopted or rejected

X based methods provide a means of ...
A case study approach was used to allow a ...
This method is particularly useful in studying ...
A quantitative approach was employed since ...
Qualitative methods offer an effective way of ...
The design of the questionnaires was based on ...
The X method is one of the more practical ways of ...
The semi-structured approach was chosen because ...
The X approach has a number of attractive features: ...
For this study, the X was used to explore the subsurface ...
The second advantage of using the multivariate method is ...
The study uses qualitative analysis in order to gain insights into ...
One advantage of the X analysis is that it avoids the problem of ...
Smith et al. (1994) identify several advantages of the case study, ...
It was decided that the best method to adopt for this investigation was to ...
It was considered that quantitative measures would usefully supplement and extend the ...
Many of the distributions were not normal so non-parametric signed rank tests were run.
The sensitivity of the X technique has been demonstrated in a report by Smith et al (2011).

A case-study approach was	used chosen adopted	to ensure that ... to help understand how ... to allow a deeper insight into ... to conduct this exploratory study to evaluate the effectiveness of ... to determine the factors that affect ... to gain a detailed understanding of ... to assess the management practices of ... to obtain further in-depth information on the ... to provide rounded, detailed illustrations of the ... to capture the complexities of the phenomenon
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A major problem with the experimental method is that ...

The main disadvantage of the experimental method is that ...

However, there are certain drawbacks associated with the use of ...

There are certain problems with the use of focus groups. One of these is that there is less ...

Indicating a specific method

X was prepared according to the procedure used by Patel et al. (1957).

The synthesis of X was done according to the procedure of Smith (1973).

X was synthesised using the same method that was detailed for Y, using

This compound was prepared by adapting the procedure used by Zhao et al. (1990).

An alternative method for making scales homogenous is by using

Samples were analysed for X as previously reported by Smith et al. (2012)

Describing the characteristics of the sample

The cohort was divided into two groups according to ...

A random sample of patients with ... was recruited from ...

Articles were searched from January 1965 until April 2014.

Forty-seven students studying X were recruited for this study.

A systematic literature review was conducted of studies that ...

Just over half the sample (53%) was female, of whom 69% were ...

Of the initial cohort of 123 students, 66 were female and 57 male.

Only children aged between 10 and 15 years were included in the study.

Eligible women who matched the selection criteria were identified by ...

The participants were divided into two groups based on their performance on ...

Two groups of subjects were interviewed, namely X and Y. The first group were ...

The project used a convenience sample of 32 first year modern languages students.

All of the participants were aged between 18 and 19 at the beginning of the study...

All studies described as using some sort of X procedure were included in the analysis.

Participants were recruited from 15 clinics across ..., covering urban and rural areas ...

The initial sample consisted of 200 students, 75 of whom belonged to minority groups.
Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 17 male offenders with a mean age of 38 years.

Indicating criteria for selection or inclusion

Criteria for selecting the subjects were as follows:
Publications were only included in the analysis if
To identify X, the following parameters were used ...
The area of study was chosen for its relatively small ...
Primary inclusion criteria for the X participants were ...
Eligibility criteria required individuals to have received ...
Five individuals were excluded from the study on the basis of ...
A small sample was chosen because of the expected difficulty of obtaining ...
The subjects were selected on the basis of a degree of homogeneity of their ...
A comparison group of 12 male subjects without any history of X was drawn from a pool of ...

Describing the process: infinitive of purpose

In order to identify ..., the participants were asked to ...
In order to understand how X regulates Y, a series of transfections was performed.
To establish whether ...,
To measure X, a question asking ... was used.
To determine whether ..., the cells were incubated for ...
To rule out the possibility that X, the participants were ...
To control for bias, measurements were carried out by another person.
To assess whether and how Xs are produced and received, we measured ...
To see if the two methods gave the same measurement, the data was plotted and ...
To enable the subjects to see the computer screen clearly, the laptop was configured with ...
To increase the reliability of measures, each X was tested twice with a 4-minute break between ...
To compare the scores three weeks after initial screening, a global ANOVA F-test was used

The vials were capped with ... to prevent ...
The process was repeated several times in order to remove ...
In an attempt to make each interviewee feel as comfortable as possible, the interviewer ...

Describing the process: other phrases expressing purpose

For the attitude questions, a Likert scale was used.
For the purpose of height measurement, subjects were asked to stand ...
For the purpose of analysis, two segments were extracted from each ...
For the estimation of protein concentration, 100 µL of protein sample was mixed with ...

Describing the process: typical verbs in the passive form

The data *were normalised* using ...
Ethical approval *was obtained* from ...
Drugs *were administered* by icv injection ...
Descriptive data *were generated* for all variables.
The procedures of this study *were approved* by ...
Prompts *were used* as an aid to question two so that ...

Data for this study *were retrospectively collected* from ...
The experiments *were run* using custom software written in...
Two sets of anonymised questionnaires *were completed* by ...
The solution *was washed* three times with deionized water and ...
A total of 256 samples *were taken* from 52 boreholes (Figure 11).
Significance levels *were set* at the 1% level using the student t-test.
Data management and analysis *were performed* using SPSS 16.0 (2010).
Published studies were identified using a search strategy developed in ...
Injection solutions *were coded* by a colleague to reduce experimenter bias.
The subjects *were asked* to pay close attention to the characters whenever ...
The pilot interviews *were conducted* informally by the trained interviewer ...
Article references *were searched* further for additional relevant publications.
The experiments *were conducted* over the course of the growing period from ...
Blood samples *were obtained* with consent, from 256 Caucasian male patients ...
Independent tests *were carried out* on the x and y scores for the four years from ...
The mean score for the two trials *was subjected* to multivariate analysis of variance to ...
This experiment *was repeated* under conditions in which the poor signal/noise ratio was improved.

Describing the process: sequence words and phrases

To begin this process, ...
The first step in this process was to ...
The second method used to identify X involved ...

Prior to	commencing the study, ethical clearance was sought from ... analysing the interview data, the transcripts were checked for ... data collection, the participants received explanation of the project undertaking the investigation, ethical clearance was obtained from ...
After	'training', the participants were told that ... collection, the samples were shipped back to X in ... testing for the presence of antibodies, the blood was ... the appliance was fitted, the patients attended X every four weeks
On	arrival at the clinic, patients were asked to ... completion of X, the process of parameter estimation was carried out obtaining written informed consent from the patients, a questionnaire was ...
Once	the samples were extracted, it was first necessary to ... the Xs were located and marked, a thin clear plastic ruler ... the exposures were completed, the X was removed from the Y and placed in ... the positions had been decided upon, the Xs were removed from each Y and ...

Following	<p>correction for ..., X was reduced to ...</p> <p>conformational analysis of X, it was necessary to ...</p> <p>administration of X to patients, we assessed the effects on ...</p> <p>this treatment, the samples were recovered and stored overnight</p>
When	<p>dividing X, care was taken to ...</p> <p>removing X, it was important to ...</p> <p>inviting the participants, the purpose of the research was clearly explained</p>

The subjects were *then* shown a film individually and were asked to ...

The soil was *then* weighed again, and this weight was recorded as ...

The results were corrected for the background readings and *then* averaged before ...

These ratings were *then* made for the ten stimuli to which the subject had been exposed ...

The analysis was checked when initially performed and *then* checked again at the end of ...

Finally, questions were asked as to the role of ...

In the follow-up phase of the study, participants were asked ...

The final stage of the study comprised a semi-structured interview with participants who ...

Describing the process: adverbs of manner

The medium was then *aseptically* transferred to a conical flask.

A sample of the concentrate was then *carefully* injected into ...

The tubes were *accurately* reweighed to six decimal places using ...

The soil was then placed in a furnace and *gradually* heated up to ...

The vials were shaken *manually* to allow the soil to mix well with the water.

The resulting solution was *gently* mixed at room temperature for ten minutes and ...

Describing the process: using + instruments

Data were collected using two high spectral resolution Xs.

Semi-automated genotyping was carried out using X software and ...

Using the X-ray and looking at the actual X, it was possible to identify ...

Comparisons between the two groups were made using unrelated t-tests

The data were recorded on a digital audio recorder and transcribed using a ...

Statistical significance was analysed using analysis of variance and t-tests as appropriate..

Using an Anthos Micro plate Reader, we were able to separate single cells into different ...

15 subjects were recruited using email advertisements requesting healthy students from ...

All the work on the computer was carried out using Quattro Pro for Windows and ...

Describing the process: statistical procedures

The data *were normalised* using ...

A p value Descriptive data *were generated* for all variables.

Reliability *was calculated* using Cronbach's alpha.

All analyses *were carried out* using SPSS, version 20.

Statistical analysis *was performed* using SPSS software (version 20).

Significance levels *were set* at the 1% level using the student t-test.

Data management and analysis *were performed* using SPSS 16.0 (2010).

The mean score for the two trials *was subjected* to multivariate analysis of variance to ...

Indicating problems or limitations

In particular, the analysis of X was problematic.

In observational studies, there is a potential for bias from ...

The small size of the dataset meant that it was not possible to ...

Further data collection is required to determine exactly how X affects Y.

Another major source of uncertainty is in the method used to calculate X.

In this investigation there are several sources for error. The main error is ...

It was not possible to investigate the significant relationships of X and Y further because...

The responses relating to X were subjective and were therefore susceptible to recall bias.

Reporting Results

The standard approach to this section of a research article or dissertation is to present and describe the results in a systematic and detailed way. When reporting qualitative results, the researcher will highlight and comment on the themes that emerge from the analysis. These comments will often be illustrated with excerpts from the raw data. In text based studies, this may comprise quotations from primary sources. In quantitative studies, the results section is likely to consist of tables and figures, and writers comment on the significant data shown in these. This often takes the form of the location or summary statement, which identifies the table or figure and indicates its content, and a highlighting statement or statements, which point out and describe the relevant or significant data. All figures and tables should be numbered and given a title. More elaborate commentary on the results is normally restricted to the Discussion section. In research articles, however, authors may comment extensively on their results as they are presented, and it is not uncommon for the Results section to be combined with the Discussion section under the heading: Results and Discussion.

Reference to aim or method

The first set of questions aimed to ...
Simple statistical analysis was used to ...
The next question asked the informants ...
Changes in X and Y were compared using ...
To assess X, the Y questionnaire was used.
Regression analysis was used to predict the ...
To distinguish between these two possibilities, ...
The first set of analyses examined the impact of ...
The correlation between X and Y was tested using ...
T-tests were used to analyse the relationship between ...
The average scores of X and Y were compared in order to ...
In order to assess Z, repeated-measures ANOVAs were used.
Nine items on the questionnaire measured the extent to which ...
To compare the scores three weeks after initial screening, a global ANOVA F-test was used.
The Pearson product moment correlation coefficient was used to determine the relationship between ...

Table 1 Figure 1	shows compares presents provides	an overview of ... the experimental data on X. the summary statistics for ... the breakdown of X according to ... the results obtained from the preliminary analysis of X. the intercorrelations among the nine measures of X.
The table below illustrates The pie chart above shows The top half of the table shows The bottom half of the table shows		some of the main characteristics of the ... the breakdown of ...

<p>As shown in Figure 1, As can be seen from the table (above), It can be seen from the data in Table 1 that From the graph above we can see that</p>	<p>the X group reported significantly more Y than the other two groups.</p>	
<p>The results obtained from the preliminary analysis of X The results of the correlational analysis The themes identified in these responses</p>	<p>are shown can be compared are presented are set out are summarised</p>	<p>in Table 1. in Figure 1.</p>

Highlighting significant data in a table or chart

What is interesting in this data is that ...
It is apparent from this table that very few ...
In Fig.10 there is a clear trend of decreasing ...
The differences between X and Y are highlighted in Table 4
This table is quite revealing in several ways. First, unlike the other tables ...
From the chart, it can be seen that by far the greatest demand is for ...
From the data in Figure 9, it is apparent that the length of time left between ...
From this data, we can see that Study 2 resulted in the lowest value of ...
Data from this table can be compared with the data in Table 4.6 which shows ...
As Table III shows, there is a significant difference ($t = -2.15$, $p = 0.03$) between the two groups.

Statements of positive result

The mean score for X was ...
Further analysis showed that ...
Further statistical tests revealed ...
A two-way ANOVA revealed that ...
Strong evidence of X was found when ...
Post hoc analysis revealed that during ...
On average, Xs were shown to have ...
Interestingly, for those subjects with X, ...
This result is significant at the $p = 0.05$ level.
A positive correlation was found between X and Y.
The results, as shown in Table 1, indicate that ...
There was a significant positive correlation between ...
There was a significant difference between the two conditions ...

Statements of negative result

No increase in X was detected.
No difference greater than X was observed.
There was no increase of X associated with

There were no significant differences between ...
No significant differences were found between ...
None of these differences were statistically significant.
No significant reduction in X was found compared with placebo.
Overall, X did not affect males and females differently in these measures.
The Chi-square test did not show any significant differences between ...
A clear benefit of X in the prevention of Y could not be identified in this analysis.
Only trace amounts of X were detected in ...

Highlighting significant, interesting or surprising results

Interestingly, the X was observed to ...
Interestingly, this correlation is related to ...
The more surprising correlation is with the ...
The most surprising aspect of the data is in the ...
The correlation between X and Y is interesting because ...
The most striking result to emerge from the data is that ...
Interestingly, there were also differences in the ratios of ...
The single most striking observation to emerge from the data comparison was ...

Reporting a reaction

Stimulation of X cells with Y did not increase the
With successive increases in intensity of the X, the Y moved further to
Following the addition of X, a significant increase ($P < 0.05$) in the Y was recorded.
When X cells were stimulated with Y, no significant difference in the number of Z was detected.

Reporting results from questionnaires and interviews

Thirty-two individuals returned the questionnaires.
The response rate was 60% at six months and 56% at 12 months.
Of the study population, 90 subjects completed and returned the questionnaire.
By the end of the survey period, data had been collected from 64 individuals, 23 of whom were ...

Respondents were asked to indicate whether ...
The overall response to this question was poor.
Respondents were asked to suggest other reasons for ...
There were 53 responses to the question: '...?'
The total number of responses for this question was ...
This section of the questionnaire required respondents to give information on ...

The overall response to this question was very positive.
When asked whether ..., 90% of the respondents reported that ...
In response to the question: '...?', a range of responses was elicited.
In response to Question 1, most of those surveyed indicated that ...
When the participants were asked, the majority commented that ...
Other responses to this question included ...

Over half of those surveyed reported that ...
70% of those who were interviewed indicated that

Almost two-thirds of the participants (64%) said that
The majority of those who responded to this item felt that ...
Approximately, half of those surveyed did not comment on
Just over half of those who answered this question reported that ...
Of the 62 participants who responded to this question, 30 reported an increase in ...
Of the 148 patients who completed the questionnaire, just over half indicated that ...

As one interviewee said: ...
As one interviewee put it: ...
One participant commented: ' ... '
One informant reported that ...
The comment below illustrates...
For example, one interviewee said: ...
Talking about this issue an interviewee said: ...
Another interviewee, when asked ..., said: ...

Another interviewee alluded to the notion of ...
A minority of participants (17%) indicated that ...
Some participants expressed the belief that ...
Only a small number of respondents indicated that ...
A small number of those interviewed suggested that
One individual stated that '...' And another commented '...'

It was also suggested that ...
There were some suggestions that ...
The participants on the whole demonstrated ...
There were some negative comments about ...
This view was echoed by another informant who ...

Observations about qualitative data

A number of issues were identified ...
Five broad themes emerged from the analysis.
This theme came up for example in discussions of
Two discrete reasons emerged from this. First ... Second
The themes of X and Y recurred throughout the dataset.
A recurrent theme in the interviews was a sense amongst interviewees that ...

In all cases, the informants reported ...
A variety of perspectives were expressed ...
These views surfaced mainly in relation to ...
There was a sense of X amongst interviewees.
A common view amongst interviewees was that ...
Issues related to X were not particularly prominent in the interview data.

In their accounts of the events surrounding ...
Some interviewees argued that ... while others ...
Some felt that ... while others considered that ...
Whilst a minority mentioned that... all agreed that...
Two divergent and often conflicting discourses emerged ...

Transition statements

If we now turn to ...

A comparison of the two results reveals ...

Turning now to the experimental evidence on ...

Comparing the two results, it can be seen that ...

The next section of the survey was concerned with ...

In the final part of the survey, respondents were asked ...

Summary and transition

These results suggest that ...

Overall, these results indicate that ...

In summary, these results show that ...

In summary, for the informants in this study, ...

Together these results provide important insights into ...

Taken together, these results suggest that there is an association between ...

The results in this chapter indicate that ... The next chapter, therefore, moves on to discuss the ...

Discussing Findings

The term ‘discussion’ has a variety of meanings in English. In academic writing, however, it usually refers to two types of activity: a) considering both sides of an issue, or question before reaching a conclusion; b) considering the results of research and the implications of these. Discussion sections in dissertations and research articles are probably the most complex sections in terms of their elements. They normally centre around a ‘statement of result’ or an important ‘finding’. As there is usually more than one result, discussion sections are often structured into a series of discussion cycles. The most common elements in these cycles, and some of the language that is typically associated with them, are listed below. Note that when offering explanations and suggesting implications the language used is very tentative or cautious (refer to the section entitled [*Being Cautious*](#)).

Background information: reference to literature or to research aim/question

Several reports have shown that ...
As mentioned in the literature review, ...
The third question in this research was ...
Prior studies that have noted the importance of ...
An initial objective of the project was to identify ...
The first question in this study sought to determine ...
It was hypothesised that participants with a history of ...
Very little was found in the literature on the question of ...
The present study was designed to determine the effect of ...
With respect to the first research question, it was found that ...
This study set out with the aim of assessing the importance of X in ...
Previous studies evaluating X observed inconsistent results on whether ...
A strong relationship between X and Y has been reported in the literature.
In reviewing the literature, no data was found on the association between X and Y.

Statements of result: usually with reference to results section

One interesting finding is ...
The current study found that ...
Another important finding was that ...
The most interesting finding was that ...
In this study, Xs were found to cause ...
The results of this study show/indicate that ...
On the question of X, this study found that ...
This experiment did not detect any evidence for ...
The most important clinically relevant finding was ...

X provided the largest set of significant clusters of ...
It is interesting to note that in all seven cases of this study ...
The most obvious finding to emerge from the analysis is that ...
In the current study, comparing X with Y showed that the mean degree of ...
The results of this study did not show that .../did not show any significant increase in ...

Unexpected outcome

Surprisingly, X was found to

What is surprising is that

One unanticipated finding was that

Surprisingly, no differences were found in

This finding was unexpected and suggests that

It is somewhat surprising that no X was noted in this condition

Contrary to expectations, this study did not find a significant difference between

However, the observed difference between X and Y in this study was not significant.

However, the ANOVA (one way) showed that these results were not statistically significant.

Reference to previous research: support

These results	further support the idea of ... confirm the association between ... are consistent with data obtained in ... match those observed in earlier studies are in agreement with those obtained by ... are in line with those of previous studies are in accord with recent studies indicating that ... seem to be consistent with other research which found ... are consistent with those of Smith and Jones (2015) who ... are in agreement with Smith's (1999) findings which showed ... support previous research into this brain area which links X and Y corroborate the ideas of Smith and Jones (2008), who suggested that ...
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Reference to previous research: contrast

This study has been unable to demonstrate that ...

However, this result has not previously been described.

In contrast to earlier findings, however, no evidence of X was detected.

Smith et al. (1999) showed that This differs from the findings presented here ...

However, the findings of the current study do not support the previous research.

It has been suggested that ... (Smith et al., 2002). This does not appear to be the case.

These results differ from X's 2003 estimate of Y, but they are broadly consistent with earlier ...

Although, these results differ from some published studies (Smith, 1992; Jones, 1996), they are consistent with those of ...

Explanations for results

A possible explanation for this might be that ...

Another possible explanation for this is that ...

This result may be explained by the fact that ...

There are, however, other possible explanations.

These relationships may partly be explained by ...
There are several possible explanations for this result.
A possible explanation for these results may be the lack of adequate ...
These differences can be explained in part by the proximity of X and Y.
These factors may explain the relatively good correlation between X and Y.

This inconsistency may be due to ...
These results are likely to be related to ...
This discrepancy could be attributed to ...
It seems possible that these results are due to ...
This rather contradictory result may be due to ...
The observed increase in X could be attributed to ...
It is difficult to explain this result, but it might be related to ...

The possible interference of X cannot be ruled out.
It may be that these participants benefitted from ...
Differences between X and Y may have influenced ...
These possible sources of error could have affected ...
There are two likely causes for the differences between ...
The reason for this is not clear but it may have something to do with ...
The observed correlation between X and Y might be explained in this way: ...
Since this difference has not been found elsewhere it is probably not due to ...

Advising cautious interpretation

Another source of uncertainty is ...
A note of caution is due here since ...
These findings may be somewhat limited by ...
These findings cannot be extrapolated to all patients.
These data must be interpreted with caution because ...
It could be argued that the positive results were due to ...
These results therefore need to be interpreted with caution.
In observational studies, there is a potential for bias from ...
It is important to bear in mind the possible bias in these responses.
Although exclusion of X did not ..., these results should be interpreted with caution.
However, with a small sample size, caution must be applied, as the findings might not be ...

Suggesting general hypotheses

It is possible, therefore, that ...
It can thus be suggested that ...
In general, therefore, it seems that ...
It may be the case therefore that these variations ...
It is therefore likely that such connections exist between ...
It is possible to hypothesise that these conditions are less likely to occur in ...

These findings suggest that ...
According to these data, we can infer that ...
This observation may support the hypothesis that ...
Hence, it could conceivably be hypothesised that ...

The value of X suggests that a weak link may exist between ...
These results provide further support for the hypothesis that ...
Therefore, X could be a major factor, if not the only one, causing ...

Noting implications

It can therefore be assumed that the ...
An implication of this is the possibility that ...
The present study raises the possibility that ...
One of the issues that emerges from these findings is ...
Some of the issues emerging from this finding relate specifically to ...

These findings may help us to understand ...
This finding, while preliminary, suggests that
This finding has important implications for developing ...
This observational study suggests that a diet rich in X may help prevent ...
These findings raise intriguing questions regarding the nature and extent of ...
This combination of findings provides some support for the conceptual premise that ...

Commenting on findings

These findings are rather disappointing.
However, these results were not very encouraging.
The test was successful as it was able to identify students who ...
The present results are significant in at least two major respects.
The results of this study do not explain the occurrence of these adverse events.
These findings will doubtless be much scrutinised, but there are some immediately dependable conclusions for ...

Suggestions for future work

This is an important issue for future research.
Research questions that could be asked include ...
There are still many unanswered questions about ...
Several questions remain unanswered at present.
Despite these promising results, questions remain.
Further work is required to establish the viability of...
Further research should be undertaken to investigate the ...
There is abundant room for further progress in determining ...
A further study with more focus on X is therefore suggested.
Future studies on the current topic are therefore recommended.
In further research, the use of this data as X could be a means of ...
To develop a full picture of X additional studies will be needed that ...
In future investigations, it might be possible to use a different X in which ...
Further studies, which take these variables into account, will need to be undertaken.
However, more research on this topic needs to be undertaken before the association between X and Y is more clearly understood.

Writing Conclusions

Conclusions are shorter sections of academic texts which usually serve two functions. The first is to summarise and bring together the main areas covered in the writing, which might be called ‘looking back’; and the second is to give a final comment or judgement on this. The final comment may also include making suggestions for improvement and speculating on future directions.

In dissertations and research papers, conclusions tend to be more complex and will also include sections on the significance of the findings and recommendations for future work. Conclusions may be optional in research articles where consolidation of the study and general implications are covered in the Discussion section. However, they are usually expected in dissertations and essays.

Restatement of aims

This paper has argued that ...

This study set out to determine ...

This essay has discussed the reasons for ...

In this investigation, the aim was to assess ...

The main goal of the current study was to determine ...

The purpose of the current study was to determine ...

This project was undertaken to design ... and evaluate ...

The present study was designed to determine the effect of ...

Returning to the hypothesis/question posed at the beginning of this study, it is now possible to state that ...

Summarising research findings

This study has identified ...

This study has shown that ...

The research has also shown that ...

The second major finding was that ...

These experiments confirmed that ...

X made no significant difference to ...

This study has found that generally ...

The investigation of X has shown that ...

The results of this investigation show that ...

X, Y and Z emerged as reliable predictors of ...

Multiple regression analysis revealed that the ...

The most obvious finding to emerge from this study is that ...

The relevance of X is clearly supported by the current findings.

One of the more significant findings to emerge from this study is that ...

Suggesting implications for the field of knowledge

In general, therefore, it seems that ...

The results of this study indicate that ...

These findings suggest that in general ...

The findings of this study suggest that ...

Taken together, these results suggest that ...

An implication of this is the possibility that ...

The evidence from this study suggests that ...
Overall, this study strengthens the idea that ...
The current data highlight the importance of ...
The findings of this research provide insights for ...
The results of this research support the idea that ...
These data suggest that X can be achieved through ...
The theoretical implications of these findings are unclear.
The principal theoretical implication of this study is that ...
This study has raised important questions about the nature of ...
The following conclusions can be drawn from the present study ...
Taken together, these findings suggest a role for X in promoting Y.
The findings of this investigation complement those of earlier studies.
These findings have significant implications for the understanding of how ...
Although this study focuses on X, the findings may well have a bearing on ...

Significance of the findings or contribution of the study

This research extends our knowledge of ...
This research will serve as a base for future studies and ...
This research provides a framework for the exploration of ...
This research has several practical applications. Firstly, it points to ...

These findings enhance our understanding of ...
The findings of this thesis could be used to help ...
The current findings add to a growing body of literature on ...
Taken together, these findings suggest a role for X in promoting Y.
The findings of this investigation complement those of earlier studies.

A key strength of the present study was the ...
The present study makes several noteworthy contributions to ...
The present study should prove to be particularly valuable to ...
The present study provides additional evidence with respect to ...
The present study confirms previous findings and contributes additional evidence that suggests ...

The key strengths of this study are its long duration and ...
The empirical findings in this study provide a new understanding of ...
The study has gone some way towards enhancing our understanding of ...
The study has confirmed the findings of Smith et al. (2001) which found that ...
The findings from this study make several contributions to the current literature. First,...

This is the first study to investigate the effect of ...
This is the first time that X has been used to explore ...
This study has demonstrated, for the first time, that ...
This is the first study reporting an advantage in those who ...
This is the largest study so far documenting a delayed onset of ...

The contribution of this study has been to confirm ...
This work contributes to existing knowledge X by providing ...
The analysis of X undertaken here, has extended our knowledge of ...

The methods used for this X may be applied to other Xs elsewhere in the world.
The X that we have identified therefore assists in our understanding of the role of ...

Significance of the findings with a qualification

Notwithstanding these limitations, the study suggests that ...
Whilst this study did not confirm X, it did partially substantiate ...
Despite its exploratory nature, this study offers some insight into ...
Although the current study is based on a small sample of participants, the findings suggest ...

Limitations of the current study

A limitation of this study is that ...
Being limited to X, this study lacks ...
The small sample size did not allow ...
The major limitation of this study is the ...
This study was limited by the absence of ...
X makes these findings less generalisable to ...
Thirdly, the study did not evaluate the use of ...
It is unfortunate that the study did not include ...
The scope of this study was limited in terms of ...
The study is limited by the lack of information on ...
The most important limitation lies in the fact that ...
The main weakness of this study was the paucity of ...
Since the study was limited to X, it was not possible to ..
An additional uncontrolled factor is the possibility that ...
It was not possible to assess X; therefore, it is unknown if ...
An issue that was not addressed in this study was whether...
The generalisability of these results is subject to certain limitations. For instance, ...
One source of weakness in this study which could have affected the measurements of X was ...

Recommendations for further research work

More research using controlled trials is needed to ...
What is now needed is a cross-national study involving ...
More broadly, research is also needed to determine ...
More research is required to determine the efficacy of ...
More research is needed to better understand when implementation ends and ...
This research has thrown up many questions in need of further investigation.

It would be interesting to assess the effects of ...
It would be interesting to compare experiences of individuals within the same
It is recommended that further research be undertaken in the following areas:
It is suggested that the association of these factors is investigated in future studies.

A further study could assess the long-term effects of ...
Further work needs to be done to establish whether ...
Further studies need to be carried out in order to validate ...
Further experimental investigations are needed to estimate ...

Further studies regarding the role of X would be worthwhile/interesting.
Further investigation and experimentation into X is strongly recommended.

Further research	might explore ... could usefully explore how ... should focus on determining ... is required to determine whether ... in this field would be of great help in ... should be carried out to establish the ... should be undertaken to explore how ... on these questions would be a useful way of ... needs to examine more closely the links between X and Y. could also be conducted to determine the effectiveness of ...
------------------	--

Future trials should assess the impact of ...
A future study investigating X would be very interesting.
In terms of directions for future research, further work could ...
Future research should therefore concentrate on the investigation of ...
Another possible area of future research would be to investigate why ...
A number of possible future studies using the same experimental set up are apparent.

The study should be repeated using ...
A natural progression of this work is to analyse ...
Considerably more work will need to be done to determine
These findings provide the following insights for future research: ...
The precise mechanism of X in insects remains to be elucidated.

This would be a fruitful area for further work.
Large randomised controlled trials could provide more definitive evidence.
A greater focus on X could produce interesting findings that account more for ...
The issue of X is an intriguing one which could be usefully explored in further research.

If the debate is to be moved forward, a better understanding of X needs to be developed.
I suggest that before X is introduced, a study similar to this one should be carried out on ...
More information on X would help us to establish a greater degree of accuracy on this matter.

Implications or recommendations for practice or policy

Other types of X could include: a), b). ...
There is, therefore, a definite need for ...
Greater efforts are needed to ensure ...
Provision of X will enhance Y and reduce Z.
Another important practical implication is that ...
Moreover, more X should be made available to ...

The challenge now is to fabricate Xs that contain ...
Unless governments adopt X, Y will not be attained.
These findings suggest several courses of action for ...
A reasonable approach to tackle this issue could be to ...
Continued efforts are needed to make X more accessible to ...
The findings of this study have a number of practical implications.
There are a number of important changes which need to be made.
Management to enhance bumble-bee populations might involve ...
This study suggests that X should be avoided by people who are prone to ...
A key policy priority should therefore be to plan for the long-term care of ...
This information can be used to develop targetted interventions aimed at ...
Taken together, these findings do not support strong recommendations to ...
Ensuring appropriate systems, services and support for X should be a priority for ...
The findings of this study have a number of important implications for future practice.

Being Critical

As an academic writer, you are expected to be critical of the sources that you use. This essentially means questioning what you read and not necessarily agreeing with it just because the information has been published. Being critical can also mean looking for reasons why we should not just accept something as being correct or true. This can require you to identify problems with a writer's arguments or methods, or perhaps to refer to other people's criticisms of these. Constructive criticism goes beyond this by suggesting ways in which a piece of research or writing could be improved.

... being against is not enough. We also need to develop habits of constructive thinking.

Edward de Bono

Introducing questions, problems and limitations: theory or argument

The main weakness with this theory is that ...

The key problem with this explanation is that ...

However, this theory does not fully explain why ...

One criticism of much of the literature on X is that ...

However, there is an inconsistency with this argument.

A serious weakness with this argument, however, is that ...

One question that needs to be asked, however, is whether ...

Smith's argument relies too heavily on qualitative analysis of ...

Smith's interpretation overlooks much of the historical research ...

Many writers have challenged Smith's claim on the grounds that ...

Smith's analysis does not take account of X, nor does he examine ...

It seems that Jones' understanding of the X framework is questionable.

The existing accounts fail to resolve the contradiction between X and Y.

One of the limitations with this explanation is that it does not explain why...

Introducing questions, problems and limitations: method or practice

One major drawback of this approach is that ...

Selection bias is another potential concern because ...

Perhaps the most serious disadvantage of this method is that ...

The main limitation of biosynthetic incorporation, however, is ...

All the studies reviewed so far, however, suffer from the fact that ...

Another problem with this approach is that it fails to take X into account.

Difficulties arise, however, when an attempt is made to implement the policy.

Nevertheless, the strategy has not escaped criticism from governments, agencies and academics

However,

this method of analysis has a number of limitations

this method does involve potential measurement error

there are limits to how far the idea of/concept of X can be taken

approaches of this kind carry with them various well known limitations

one of the problems with the instrument the researchers used to measure X was ...

However, all the previously mentioned methods suffer from some serious	drawbacks limitations weaknesses shortcomings disadvantages
--	---

Identifying a study's weakness

(However,)	Smith fails to fully define what ... Jones fails to acknowledge the significance of ... the author overlooks the fact that X contributes to Y what Smith fails to do is to draw a distinction between ... the paper would appear to be over ambitious in its claims another weakness is that we are given no explanation of how ... no attempt was made to quantify the association between X and Y the main weakness of the study is the failure to address how ... the study fails to consider the differing categories of damage that ... the research does not take into account pre-existing ... such as ... the author offers no explanation for the distinction between X and Y Smith makes no attempt to differentiate between different types of X	
Smith The paper The book	fails to does not makes no attempt to	specify ... quantify ... compare ... separate ... account for ... suggest why ... analyse how ... ascertain whether ... distinguish between ... explain the meaning of ... provide information on ... address the question of ... assess the effectiveness of ... use a standardised method of ... give sufficient consideration to ... consider the long term impact of ... offer an adequate explanation for ... engage with current discourses on ...

		determine the underlying causes of ... systematically review all the relevant literature
--	--	---

Offering constructive suggestions

The study would have been more interesting if it had included ...

These studies would have been more useful if they had focused on ...

The study would have been more relevant if the researchers had asked ...

The questionnaire would have been more useful if it had asked participants about ...

The research would have been more relevant if a wider range of X had been explored

Smith's paper Her conclusions The study The findings	would have been might have been	more much more far more	useful relevant convincing interesting persuasive original	if he/she had if the author had	included ... considered ... assessed ... addressed ... adopted ... used ...
---	--	---------------------------------------	---	--	--

A more comprehensive study would include all the groups of ...

A better study would examine a large, randomly selected sample of societies with ...

A much more systematic approach would identify how X interacts with other variables that are believed to be linked to ...

Using evaluative adjectives to comment on research

In her In their In this	excellent comprehensive detailed useful thorough ground breaking timely important impressive ----- limited small-scale	analysis (of X), examination (of X), study (of X), survey (of X), investigation (into Y),	Smith (2012) Jones et al. (2012)	found ... was/were able to show that ... concluded that ...
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Highlighting inadequacies of previous studies

Previous studies of X have not dealt with ...
Researchers have not treated X in much detail.
Such expositions are unsatisfactory because they ...
Most studies in the field of X have only focused on ...
Such approaches, however, have failed to address ...
Previous published studies are limited to local surveys.
Half of the studies evaluated failed to specify whether ...
The research to date has tended to focus on X rather than Y.
Previously published studies on the effect of X are not consistent.
Smith's analysis does not take account of ..., nor does she examine ...
The existing accounts fail to resolve the contradiction between X and Y.
Most studies in X have only been carried out in a small number of areas.
However, much of the research up to now has been descriptive in nature ...
The generalisability of much published research on this issue is problematic.
Research on the subject has been mostly restricted to limited comparisons of ...
However, few writers have been able to draw on any systematic research into ...
Short-term studies such as these do not necessarily show subtle changes over time ...
Although extensive research has been carried out on X, no single study exists which ...
However, these results were based upon data from over 30 years ago and it is unclear if ...
The experimental data are rather controversial, and there is no general agreement about ...

Introducing general criticism

Critics question the ability of poststructuralist theory to provide ...
Non-government agencies are also very critical of the new policies.
Smith's meta-analysis has been subjected to considerable criticism.
The most important of these criticisms is that Smith failed to note that ...
The X theory has been vigorously challenged in recent years by a number of writers.
These claims have been strongly contested in recent years by a number of writers.
More recent arguments against X have been summarised by Smith and Jones (1982):
Critics have also argued that not only do surveys provide an inaccurate measure of X, but the ...
Many analysts now argue that the strategy of X has not been successful. Jones (2003), for example, argues that ...

Introducing the critical stance of particular writers

Jones (2003) has also questioned why ...
However, Jones (2003) points out that ...
The authors challenge the widely held view that
Jones (2003) has challenged some of Smith's conclusions, arguing that ...
Jones (2003) is critical of the conclusions that Smith draws from his findings.
Jones (2003) is probably the best known critic of the X theory. He argues that ...
The latter point has been devastatingly critiqued by Jones (2003), who argues that ...
Other authors (see Harbison, 2003; Kaplan, 2004) question the usefulness of such an approach.
Smith's analysis has been criticised by a number of writers. Jones (1993), for example, points out that ...

Being Cautious

One of the most noticeable stylistic aspects of academic communication is the tendency for writers to avoid expressing absolute certainty, where there may be a small degree of uncertainty, and to avoid making over-generalisations, where a small number of exceptions might exist. This means that there are many instances where the epistemological strength (strength of knowledge) of a statement or claim is mitigated (weakened) in some way. In the field of linguistics, devices for lessening the strength of a statement or claim are known as hedging devices.

Analysis of research reports have shown that discussion sections tend to be particularly rich in hedging devices, particularly where writers are offering explanations for findings.

Devices that distance the author from a proposition

It is believed that ...

It is thought that ...

It is a widely held view that ...

It has been reported that ...

It has commonly been assumed that ...

According to Smith (2002), ...

According to recent reports, ...

According to many in the field ...

Smith (2001) holds the view that ...

Many scholars hold the view that ...

Recent research has suggested that ...

There is some evidence to suggest that ...

If Smith's (2001) findings are accurate, ...

Being cautious when giving explanations or hypothesising

These frequent storms	are almost certainly are probably could be may be might be	due to climate change.
It is almost certain that It is likely that It may be that It could be that It is possible that	the more extreme weather	is a result of climate change.

A likely explanation A probable explanation A possible explanation	is that	these frequent storms	are a result of climate change.
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Being cautious when explaining results

This inconsistency may be due to ...
This discrepancy could be attributed to ...
A possible explanation for this might be that ...
It seems possible that these results are due to ...
This rather contradictory result may be due to ...
The observed increase in X could be attributed to ...
The possible interference of X cannot be ruled out ...
There are several possible explanations for this result.
There are two likely causes for the differences between ...
A possible explanation for these results may be the lack of adequate ...
Since this difference has not been found elsewhere it is probably not due to ...

Being cautious when discussing implications or recommendations

One possible implication of this is that ...
The findings of this study suggest that ...
The evidence from this study suggests that ...
Taken together, these results suggest that ...
The data reported here appear to support the assumption that ...
Initial observations suggest that there may be a link between ...
The findings from these studies suggest that X can have an effect on ...

Strategies to enhance X might involve ...
Other types of response could include: a), b). ...
These results would seem to suggest that the ...
There would therefore seem to be a definite need for ...
A reasonable approach to tackle this issue could be to ...
Another possible area of future research would be to investigate why ...

Devices for avoiding over-generalisation

Ozone is toxic to	almost all most many types of the majority of certain types of some types of	living organisms.
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Ozone levels	nearly always frequently generally often sometimes occasionally	exceed WHO levels in many cities.
--------------	--	-----------------------------------

Ozone tends to attack cells and break down tissues.
There is a tendency for ozone to attack cells.

In general, this requires ...

In general terms, this means ...

Xs use generally accepted principles to ...

Authors generally place an emphasis on ...

X is generally assumed to play a role in ...

Generally accepted methods for X include: ...

Studies which show no effect are not generally published.

Research articles generally consist of the following components:

Quantitative research is generally associated with the positivist paradigm.

Being cautious when writing about the future

Severe weather	will almost certainly will probably is likely to could may might	become more common in the future.
It is almost certain that There is a strong possibility that It is likely that There is a possibility that There is a small chance that		the situation will improve in the long term.

Advising cautious interpretation of findings (Refer to *Discussing Findings*)

These findings cannot be extrapolated to all patients.

These data must be interpreted with caution because ...

These results therefore need to be interpreted with caution.

It is important to bear in mind the possible bias in these responses.

Although exclusion of X did not ..., these results should be interpreted with caution.

However, with a small sample size, caution must be applied, as the findings might not be ...

Classifying and Listing

When we classify things, we group and name them on the basis of something that they have in common. By doing this we can understand certain qualities and features which they share as a class. Classifying is also a way of understanding differences between things. In writing, classifying is often used as a way of introducing a reader to a new topic. Along with writing definitions, the function of classification may be used in the early part of an essay, or longer piece of writing. We list things when we want to treat and present a series of items or different pieces of information systematically. The order of a list may indicate rank importance.

General classifications

X may be divided into	three main	classes. sub-groups. categories.
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X may be classified	on the basis of according to depending on in terms of	Y	into Xi and Xii.
---------------------	--	---	------------------

It has become commonplace to distinguish ‘passive’ from ‘active’ forms of X.

Bone is generally classified into two types: X bone, also known as ..., and Y bone or ...

Systems theory distinguishes two different types of X, i.e. social and semantic Xs (Al-Masry 2013).

There are two main types of memory: declarative and non-declarative memory. Declarative memory can be broken down into X and Y.

Aristotle’s systematic treatises may be grouped in several divisions: logic, psychological works, physical ...

The works of Aristotle fall under three headings: (1) dialogues and ...; (2) collections of facts and ...; and (3) systematic works.

There are two basic approaches currently being adopted in research into X. One is the Y approach and the other is ...

Associative learning can be categorised into classical and operant conditioning. Classical conditioning was first ...

Generally, spectra typing provides two types of information: band intensity pattern and band number.

Specific classifications

In the traditional system, X is graded	in terms of ... on the basis of ... according to whether ...
--	--

Smith (1966)	divided classified grouped	Xs	into two broad types: Xi's and Xii's.
Thomas (1996) describes	four basic kinds of validity:	logical, content, criterion and construct.	

Individuals were classified as belonging to upper or lower categories of ...

Smith and Jones (2003) argue that there are two broad categories of Y, which are: a) ... and b) ...

For Aristotle, motion is of four kinds: (1) motion which ...; (2) motion which ...; (3) motion which ...; and (4) motion which ...

To better understand the mechanisms of X and its therapeutic implications, Smith et al.(2011) classified X into 3 distinct types using ...

Commenting on a system of classification

This system of classification	<p>includes ...</p> <p>allows for ...</p> <p>helps distinguish ...</p> <p>is useful because ...</p> <p>is very simple and ...</p> <p>provides a basis for ...</p> <p>can vary depending on ...</p> <p>was agreed upon after ...</p> <p>has been broadened to include ...</p> <p>was developed for the purpose of ...</p> <p>is more scientific since it is based on ...</p> <p>is now out of date.</p> <p>can be problematic.</p> <p>is in need of revision.</p> <p>poses a problem for ...</p> <p>has limited utility with respect to ...</p>
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Thomas (1996) describes	four basic kinds of validity:	logical, content, criterion and construct.
-------------------------	-------------------------------	--

Introducing lists

This topic can best be treated under three headings: X, Y and Z.

The key aspects of management can be listed as follows: X, Y and Z.

There are three reasons why the English language has become so dominant. These are:

There are two types of effect which result when a patient undergoes X. These are ...

The disadvantages of the new approach can be discussed under three headings, which are: ...
The Three Voices for Mass is divided into six sections. These are: the Kyrie, Gloria,
Appetitive stimuli have three separable basic functions. Firstly, they ... Secondly, they ...
During his tour of Britain, he visited the following industrial centres: Manchester, Leeds, and ...
This section has been included for several reasons: it is ...; it illustrates ...; and it describes...
The *Mass for Four Voices* consists of five movements, which are: the *Kyrie*, *Gloria*, *Credo*, *Santus* and *Agnus Dei*.

Referring to other people's lists

Smith and Jones (1991) list X, Y and Z as the major causes of infant mortality.
Smith (2003) lists the main features of X as follows: it is X; it is Y; and it has Z.
Smith (2003) argues that there are two broad categories of Y, which are: a) ... and b) ...
Smith (2003) suggests three conditions for its acceptance. Firstly, X should be ... Secondly, it needs to be ... Thirdly, ...
For Aristotle, motion is of four kinds: (1) motion which ...; (2) motion which ...; (3) motion which ...; and (4) motion which ...

Compare and Contrast

By understanding similarities and differences between two things, we can increase our understanding and learn more about both. This usually involves a process of analysis, in which we compare the specific parts as well as the whole. Comparison may also be a preliminary stage of evaluation. For example, by comparing specific aspects of A and B, we can decide which is more useful or valuable. Many paragraphs whose function is to compare or contrast will begin with an introductory sentence expressed in general terms.

Introductory Sentences: Differences

X is different from Y in a number of respects.

X differs from Y in a number of important ways.

There are a number of important differences between X and Y.

Women and men differ not only in physical attributes but also in the way in which they

Smith (2003)	found observed	distinct significant notable considerable major only slight	differences between X and Y.
--------------	-------------------	--	------------------------------

Jones (2013) found dramatic differences in the rate of decline of X between Y and Z.

Areas where significant differences have been found include X and Y.

The nervous systems of X are significantly different from those of Y in several key features.

Introductory Sentences: Similarities

The mode of processing used by the right brain	is similar to that is comparable to that is comparable in complexity to that	used by the left brain.
--	--	-------------------------

There are a number of similarities between X and Y.

The effects of X on human health are similar to those of Y.

Both X and Y generally take place in a 'safe environment'.

Numerous studies have compared Xs in humans and animals and found that they are essentially identical.

Comparison within one sentence

Oral societies tend to be more concerned with the present	whereas while	literate societies have a very definite awareness of the past.
---	------------------	--

Whereas While	oral societies tend to be more concerned with the present,	literate societies have a very definite awareness of the past.
------------------	--	--

In contrast to oral communities, it is very difficult to get away from calendar time in literate societies. Compared with people in oral cultures, people in literate cultures organise their lives around clocks and calendars.

This interpretation	contrasts with that differs from that is different from that	of Smith and Jones (2004) who argue that ...
---------------------	--	--

Comparison within one sentence (comparative forms)

In the trial, women made fewer errors than men.

Women tend to have greater/less verbal fluency than men.

Adolescents are less likely to be put to sleep by alcohol than adults.

Women are faster/slower than men at certain precision manual tasks, such as ...

Women tend to perform better/worse than men on tests of perceptual speed.

Further, men are more/less accurate in tests of target-directed motor skills.

Women are more/less likely than men to suffer aphasia when the front part of the brain is damaged.

The corpus callosum, a part of the brain connecting the two hemispheres, may be more/less extensive in women.

Indicating difference across two sentences

It is very difficult to get away from calendar time in literate societies.	By contrast, In contrast, On the other hand,	many people in oral communities have little idea of the calendar year of their birth.
--	--	---

Indicating similarity across two sentences

Young children learning their first language need simplified input.	Similarly, Likewise, In the same way,	low level adult L2 learners need graded input supplied in most cases by a teacher.
---	---	--

Defining Terms

In academic work students are often expected to give definitions of key words and phrases in order to demonstrate to their tutors that they understand these terms clearly. More generally, however, academic writers define terms so that their readers understand exactly what is meant when certain key terms are used. When important words are not clearly understood misinterpretation may result. In fact, many disagreements (academic, legal, diplomatic, personal) arise as a result of different interpretations of the same term. In academic writing, teachers and their students often have to explore these differing interpretations before moving on to study a topic.

Introductory phrases

It is necessary here to clarify exactly what is meant by ...

There is a degree of uncertainty around the terminology in ...

This shows a need to be explicit about exactly what is meant by the word X.

X is a term frequently used in the literature, but to date there is no consensus about ...

Simple three-part definitions

A university is	an institution	where knowledge is produced and passed on to others
Social Economics may be defined as	the branch of economics	[which is] concerned with the measurement, causes, and consequences of social problems.
Research may be defined as	a systematic process	which consists of three elements or components: (1) a question, problem, or hypothesis, (2) data, and (3) analysis and interpretation of data.
Braille is	a system	of touch reading and writing for blind people in which raised dots on paper represent the letters of the alphabet.

General meanings or application of meanings

The term X refers to ...

The term X encompasses A), B), and C).

X can be defined as ... It encompasses ...

X can be loosely described as a correlation.

The term X has come to be used to refer to ...

The term X is generally understood to mean ...

The term X has been applied to situations where students ...

In the literature, the term tends to be used to refer to ...

The broad use of the term X is sometimes equated with ...

Whereas X refers to the operations of ..., Y refers to the ...

The term disease refers to a biological event characterised by ...
The term X is a relatively new name for a Y, commonly referred to...
In broad biological terms, X can be defined as any stimulus that is ...
Defined as XYZ, obesity is now considered a worldwide epidemic and is associated with ...

Indicating difficulties in defining a term

A generally accepted definition of X is lacking.
Unfortunately, X remains a poorly defined term.
The term X embodies a multitude of concepts which ...
A further definition is given by Smith (1982) who describes ...
In the field of language teaching, various definitions of X are found.
Smith (2001) identified four abilities that might be subsumed under the term X: a) ...
Although differences of opinion still exist, there appears to be some agreement that X refers to ...
X is a commonly-used notion in language learning and yet it is a concept difficult to define precisely.

Specifying terms that are used in an essay or thesis

The term X will be used solely when referring to ...
In the present report, X was therefore defined in terms of ...
In this essay, the term X will be used in its broadest sense to refer to all ...
In this paper, the term that will be used to describe this phenomenon is X.
In this dissertation, the terms X and Y are used interchangeably to mean ...
Throughout this thesis, the term education is used to refer to informal systems as well as ...
While a variety of definitions of the term X have been suggested, this paper will use the definition first suggested by Smith (1968) who saw it as ...

Referring to people's definitions: author prominent

For Smith (2001), fluency means/refers to ...
Smith (2001) uses the term 'fluency' to refer to ...
Smith (1954) was apparently the first to use the term ...
The term 'fluency' is used by Smith (2001) to refer to ...
Macro-stabilisation policy is defined by Smith (2003: 119) as '... ...'
This definition is close to those of Smith (2012) and Jones (2013) who define X as ...
In 1987, sports psychologist John Smith popularized the term 'X' to describe ...
According to a definition provided by Smith (2001:23), fluency is 'the maximally ...
Aristotle defines the imagination as 'the movement which results upon an actual sensation.'
One of the first people to define nursing was Florence Nightingale (1860), who wrote: '... ...'
Chomsky writes that a grammar is a 'device of some sort for producing the' (1957, p.11).
Smith, has shown that, as late as 1920, Jones was using the term 'X' to refer to particular ...
The term 'matter' is used by Aristotle in four overlapping senses. First, it is the underlying ... Secondly, it is the potential which ...
Smith et al. (2002) have provided a new definition of health: 'health is a state of being with physical, cultural, psychological ...'

Referring to people's definitions: author non-prominent

Validity is the degree to which an assessment process or device measures what it is intended to measure (Smith et al., 1986).

Commenting on a definition

<p>This definition</p>	<p>includes ... allows for ... highlights the ... helps distinguish ... takes into account ... poses a problem for ... will continue to evolve. can vary depending on ... was agreed upon after ... has been broadened to include ...</p>
<p>The following definition is</p>	<p>intended to ... modelled on ... too simplistic: useful because ... problematic as ... inadequate since ... in need of revision since ... important for what it excludes. the most precise produced so far.</p>

Describing Trends

A trend is the general direction in which something is developing or changing over time. A projection is a prediction of future change. Trends and projections are usually illustrated using line graphs in which the horizontal axis represents time. Some of the language commonly used for writing about trends and projections is given below.

Describing trends

The graph shows that there has been a Figure 2 reveals that there has been a	slight gradual slow steady marked steep sharp	growth increase rise decrease fall decline drop	in the number of divorces in England and Wales since 1981.
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Describing high and low points in figures

Oil production peaked in 1985.

Gas production reached a (new) low in 1990

The peak age for committing a crime is 18.

The number of live births outside marriage reached a peak during the Second World War.

Projecting trends

The number of Xs The amount of Y The rate of Z	is projected to is expected to is likely to will probably	fall grow increase level off remain steady decline steadily drop sharply	after 2020.
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Describing Quantities

The language for writing about quantities can be a complex area for non-native speakers because there are many combinations of short grammar words, such as prepositions and pronouns, and these can easily be confused. Many of the phrases given below also contain approximators such as: *nearly*, *approximately*, *over half*, *less than*, *just over*.

Describing ratios and proportions

Singapore has *the highest proportion* of millionaire households.
The annual birth rate dropped from 44.4 to 38.6 per 1000 per annum.
The proportion of live births outside marriage reached *one in ten* in 1945.
East Anglia had *the lowest proportion* of lone parents at only 14 per cent.
The proportion of the population attending emergency departments was 65% higher in X than ...

Describing fractions

Over half of those surveyed indicated that ...
Nearly half of the respondents (48%) agreed that ...
Approximately half of those surveyed did not comment on ...
Less than a third of those who responded (32%) indicated that ...
The number of first marriages in the United Kingdom fell *by nearly two-fifths*.
Of the 148 patients who completed the questionnaire, *just over half* indicated that ...

Describing percentages

70% of those who were interviewed indicated that ...
Since 1981, England has experienced an *89% increase* in crime.
The response rate was *60% at six months* and 56% at 12 months.
In 1960 *just over 5%* of live births in 1960 were outside marriage.
Returned surveys from 34 radiologists yielded *a 34% response rate*.
He also noted that *less than 10%* of the articles included in his study cited ...
With each year of advancing age, the probability of having X *increased by 9.6%* ($p = 0.006$).
The mean income of *the bottom 20 percent* of U.S. families declined from \$10,716 in 1970 to ...
X found that of 2,500 abortions, 58% were in young women aged 15-24, *of whom 62%* were ...

Describing averages

The average of 12 observations in the X, Y and Z is 19.2 mgs/m ...
This figure can be seen as the *average life expectancy* at various ages.
The proposed model suggests a steep decline *in mean life expectancy* ...
Roman slaves probably had a *lower than average life expectancy*.
The mean age of Xs with coronary atherosclerosis was 48.3 ± 6.3 years.
Mean estimated age at death was 38.1 ± 12.0 years (ranging from 10 to 60+ years)
The mean score for X was subjected to multivariate analysis of variance to determine ...
The mean income of the bottom 20 percent of U.S. families declined from \$10,716 in 1970 to ...

Describing ranges

Estimates of X range from 200,000 to 700,000 and up to a million or more.

The respondents had practised for an average of 15 years (range 6 to 35 years).

The participants were aged 19 to 25 and were from both rural and urban backgrounds.

They calculated ranges of journal use from 10.7%–36.4% for the humanities, 25%–57% for ...

Rates of decline ranged from 2.71– 0.08 cms per day with a mean of 0.97 cms per day.

The evidence shows that life expectancy from birth lies in the range of twenty to thirty years.

At between 575 and 590 metres depth, the sea floor is extremely flat, with an average slope of ...

The mean income of the bottom 20 percent of U.S. families declined from \$10,716 to \$9,833.

Explaining Causality

A great deal of academic work involves understanding and suggesting solutions to problems. At postgraduate level, particularly in applied fields, students search out problems to study. In fact, one could say that problems are the raw material for a significant proportion of academic activity. However, solutions cannot be suggested unless the problem is fully analysed, and this involves a thorough understanding of the causes. Some of the language that you may find useful for explaining causes and effects is listed below.

Verbs indicating causality

Lack of protein	may cause can lead to can result in	mental disability.
Scurvy is a disease	caused by resulting from stemming from	lack of vitamin C.
Much of the instability in X	stems from	the economic effects of the war.
Low levels of chlorine	can give rise to	high blood pressure.

Nouns indicating causality

One *reason* why Xs have declined is that ...
The most likely *causes* of X are poor diet and lack of exercise.
The *causes* of X have been the subject of intense debate within ...
A *consequence* of vitamin A deficiency is blindness.
X can have profound health *consequences* for older people.
Physical activity is an important *factor* in maintaining fitness.
Many other medications have an *influence* on cholesterol levels.

Prepositional phrases indicating causality

200,000 people per year become deaf	owing to because of as a result of as a consequence of	a lack of iodine.
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Sentence connectors indicating causality

If undernourished children do survive to become adults, they have decreased learning ability.	Therefore, Consequently, Because of this, As a result (of this),	when they grow up, it will probably be difficult for them to find work.
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Adverbial elements indicating causality

Malnutrition leads to illness and a reduced ability to work in adulthood,	thus	perpetuating the poverty cycle.
The warm air rises above the surface of the sea,	thereby	creating an area of low pressure.

Other examples

Extreme loneliness is a risk factor for X.
X and Y are important driving factors of Z.
X is almost as strong a risk factor for disability as Y.
X is generally seen as a factor strongly related to Y.
The mixing of X and Y exerts a powerful effect upon Z through ...
Due to X and Y, inflowing surface water becomes more dense as it ...
Loneliness can have profound health consequences for older people.
As a consequence of X, it appears that Y alone is not the causative factor of...
The study found that loneliness has twice the impact on early death as obesity does.

Possible cause and effect relationships expressed tentatively

There is some evidence that X may affect Y.
It is not yet clear whether X is made worse by Y.
This suggests a weak link may exist between X and Y.
The use of X may be linked to behaviour problems in ...
The human papilloma virus is linked to most cervical cancer.
The findings indicate that regular exercise could improve cognitive function in people at risk of ...

X may have been an important factor in ...
X may have contributed to the increase in ...
X may have played a vital role in bringing about ...
X may have been caused by an increase in ...

In the literature, X has been associated with Y.

X in many cases may be associated with certain bacterial infections.

A high consumption of X could be associated with infertility.

Giving Examples

Writers may give specific examples as evidence to support their general claims or arguments. Examples can also be used to help the reader or listener understand unfamiliar or difficult concepts, and they tend to be easier to remember. For this reason, they are often used in teaching. Finally, students may be required to give examples in their work to demonstrate that they have understood a complex problem or concept. It is important to note that when statements are supported with examples, the explicit language signalling this may not always be used.

Examples as the main information in a sentence

A/An	well-known notable classic useful important	example of X is
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For example, the word ‘doctor’ used to mean a ‘learned man’.

For example, Smith and Jones (2004) conducted a series of semi-structured interviews in ...

Young people begin smoking for a variety of reasons. They may, for example, be influenced by

This is exemplified in the work undertaken by ...

Another example of what is meant by X is ...

This distinction is further exemplified in studies using ...

An example of this is the study carried out by Smith (2004) in which ...

The effectiveness of the X technique has been exemplified in a report by Smith et al (2010)

This is evident in the case of ...

This is certainly true in the case of ...

The evidence of X can be clearly seen in the case of ...

In a similar case in America, Smith (1992) identified ...

This can be seen in the case of the two London physics laboratories which ...

X is a good illustration of ...

X illustrates this point clearly.

This can be illustrated briefly by ...

By way of illustration, Smith (2003) shows how the data for ...

These experiments illustrate that X and Y have distinct functions in ...

Examples as additional information in a sentence

Young people begin smoking for a variety of reasons, such as pressure from peers and the role model of parents.

Pavlov found that if some other stimulus, for example the ringing of a bell, preceded the food, the dog would start salivating.

In Paris, Gassendi kept in close contact with many other prominent scholars, such as Kepler, Galileo, Hobbes, and Descartes.

The prices of resources, such as copper, iron ore, oil, coal and aluminium, have declined in real terms over the past 20 years.

Many diseases can result at least in part from stress, including: arthritis, asthma, migraine, headaches and ulcers.

Reporting cases as support

This case has shown that ...

This has been seen in the case of ...

The case reported here illustrates the ...

Overall, these cases support the view that ...

This case study confirms the importance of ...

The evidence presented thus far supports the idea that ...

This case demonstrates how X used innovative marketing strategies in ...

As this case very clearly demonstrates, it is important that ...

This case reveals the need for further investigation in patients with ...

This case demonstrates the need for better strategies for ...

In support of X, Y has been shown to induce Y in several cases (Smith et al., 2001).

Recent cases reported by Smith et al. (2013) also support the hypothesis that ...

Signalling Transition

Previewing what is to follow in a paper or dissertation is like showing a map to a driver; it enables them to see where they are going. So it is useful to think of a preview section as a 'road map' for the reader. It must be accurate, but it must be easy to follow.

Writers are also expected to indicate to the reader when they are moving from one topic to another, or from one section of text to another. These are known as transition statements and examples of these, together with some previewing statements, are given below.

Previewing sections of text

The purpose of this chapter is to review the literature on X. It begins by ...

This introductory section provides a brief overview of ... It then goes on to ...

This part of the thesis discusses the findings which emerged from the statistical analysis presented in the previous chapter.

This chapter describes and discusses the methods used in this investigation. The first section ... The second part moves on to describe in greater detail the ...

The final chapter of this dissertation is divided into two parts. The first ...

This chapter is divided into four main sections, each of which presents the results relating to one of the research questions.

The structure and biological functions of Xs will be discussed in the forthcoming sections.

Introducing a new topic or aspect of a topic

Regarding X, ...

As regards X, ...

In terms of X, ...

In the case of X ...

With regard to X, ...

With respect to X, ...

As far as X is concerned, ...

Reintroducing a topic

As explained earlier, ...

As discussed above, ...

As described on the previous page, ...

As explained in the introduction, it is clear that ...

As was pointed out in the introduction to this paper, ...

As was mentioned in the previous chapter, ...

Returning (briefly) to the (subject/issue) of X, ...

Moving from one section to the next

Before proceeding to examine X, it will be necessary to ...

Before employing these theories to examine X, it is necessary to ...

Turning now to the experimental evidence on ...

So far this paper/chapter has focussed on X. The following section will discuss ...

Having defined what is meant by X, I will now move on to discuss ...
This chapter follows on from the previous chapter, which (examined/laid out/outlined) X.
This chapter has demonstrated that ... It is now necessary to explain the course of ...
Having discussed how to construct X, the final section of this paper addresses ways of ...
This section has analysed the causes of X and has argued that ... The next part of this paper ...

Moving from one section to the next whilst indicating addition, contrast or opposition

In addition, it is important to ask ...
On the other hand, in spite of much new knowledge about the role of ...,
However, this system also has a number of serious drawbacks.
Despite this, little progress has been made in the ...

Previewing a following section

The following is a brief report on a ...
In the section that follows, it will be argued that ...
What follows is a description/outline/account of ...
The problem of X is discussed in the following section.
The next chapter describes synthesis and evaluation of ...
This raises questions about X which will be discussed in the next chapter.

Transition statements for results and discussion

Turning now to the experimental evidence on ...
Comparing the two results, it can be seen that ...
A comparison of the two results reveals ...
As pointed out in the introduction to this paper, ...
From the previous discussion, it can be seen that ...
It is also worth noting that X is significantly more frequent in ...
The differences between X and Y are highlighted in Table 4.

Summary and preview

This section has reviewed the three key aspects of ...
This chapter has described the methods used in this investigation and it has ...
In this section, it has been explained that ... The chapter that follows moves on to consider the...
This chapter began by describing X and arguing that ... It went on to suggest that the ... The next chapter describes the procedures and methods used in this investigation
These analytical procedures and the results obtained from them are described in the next chapter.
A summary of the main findings and of the principal issues and suggestions which have arisen in this discussion are provided in the next chapter, which ...
In the next section, I will present some of the findings of my empirical research on the impact of ...

Writing about the Past

Writing about the past in English is made difficult by the rather complex tense system. However, the phrases grouped below give an indication of the uses of the main tenses in academic writing. For a comprehensive explanation of the uses of the various tenses you will need to consult a good English grammar book. A good recommendation is *Practical English Usage* by Michael Swan, Oxford University Press.

Time phrases associated with the use of the simple past tense: specific times or periods of time in the past, completed

During the Nazi period,
Between 1933 and 1945,
From 1933 to 1945,
In the 1930s and 1940s,

restrictions were placed on German academics.

For centuries,
In the second half of the 19th century,
At the end of the nineteenth century,

church authorities placed restrictions on academics.

Following World War I, In 1999,

Fleming actively searched for anti-bacterial agents.
Fleming was named one of the *100 Most Important People* of the century.

Time phrases associated with the use of the present perfect tense: past and present connected

To date, little evidence has been found associating X with Y.

Up to now, the research has tended to focus on X rather than on Y.

So far, three factors have been identified as being potentially important: X, Y, and Z.

Since 1965, these four economies have doubled their share of world production and trade.

Until recently, there has been little interest in X.

Recently, these questions have been addressed by researchers in many fields.

In recent years, researchers have investigated a variety of approaches to X but ...

More recently, literature has emerged that offers contradictory findings about ...

The past decade has seen the rapid development of X in many ...
Over the past 30 years there has been a significant increase in ...
Over the past century there has been a dramatic increase in ...
Over the past few decades, the world has seen the stunning transformation of X, Y and Z.

The present perfect tense may also be used to describe research or scholarly activity that has taken place recently

Several studies have revealed that ...
Previous studies of X have not dealt with ...
A considerable amount of literature has been published on X.
There have been several investigations into the causes of illiteracy (Smith, 1985; Jones, 1987).
The new material has been shown to enhance cooling properties (Smith, 1985, Jones, 1987).
Invasive plants have been identified as major contributing factors for the decline of ...
The relationship between a diet high in fats and poor health has been widely investigated (Smith, 1985, Jones, ...

For reference to single investigations or publications in the past, the simple past tense is used

An experimental demonstration of this effect was first carried out by ...
The first experimental realisation of ..., by Smith et al. [12], used a ...
The first systematic study of X was reported by Patel et al. in 1986.
Smith and Jones (1994) were the first to describe X, and reported that ...
X as originally isolated from Y in a soil sample from ... (Wang et al., 1952).

In 1975, Smith et al. published a paper in which they described ...
In the 1950s, Gunnar Myrdal pointed to some of the ways in which ...
In 1981, Smith and co-workers demonstrated that X induced in vitro resistance to ...
In 1984, Jones et al. made several amino acid esters of X and evaluated them as ...
In 1990, Patel et al. demonstrated that replacement of H₂O with heavy water led to ...
Thirty years later, Smith (1974) reported three cases of Candida Albicans which ...