Tables and figures (data sets)

At times, you may need to insert tables and figures (e.g. graphics, photographs, diagrams, maps, graphs, drawings, flowcharts) into your essay. These data displays may have been copied or adapted from your information sources, or you may have created the data from your own research. All data displays must be relevant, aligned to the LEFT, correctly labelled and appropriately referenced; however, you are not required to reference your own work.

1. About tables and figures in your writing
2. Inserting tables in-text
3. Inserting figures in-text
4. Tables and figures in the appendices

1. About tables and figures

Tables and figures may be used as evidence to support academic argument in report and essay writing. Usually, tables and figures are placed immediately below their first mention in the text. When you refer to data sets in the text, use wording that lets the readers know what to look for (e.g. as shown in Table X, Figure 2 reveals, see Table 3, Figure 2 demonstrates the complex relationship. But, do not use ‘table above’, ‘figure below’ or page numbers to refer to data sets.)

The format for tables is the same as the format for figures, and each has its own numbering system. All tables and figures that are part of the main text require a number using Arabic numbers (e.g. Figure 1, Table 1). Numbers are assigned based on the order in which tables and figures appear in the text and are bolded and left aligned.

2. Tables

Tables typically show numerical or textual information in columns and rows. Number all tables with numbers in the exact order that you place them in your text.

Example: Table modified from reading material

In text

As shown in Table 3, the choice of reporting verbs can reflect the considered position of an author, so writers must be careful to choose reporting verbs that reflect their attitude to the topic.

Table 3

Reporting Verbs: Examples of Degrees of Endorsement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Less endorsing</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>More endorsing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>admits</td>
<td>according to</td>
<td>concurs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>asserts</td>
<td>argues</td>
<td>emphasises</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>assumes</td>
<td>details</td>
<td>identifies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>believes</td>
<td>remarks</td>
<td>proves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>implies</td>
<td>proposes</td>
<td>reasons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>suggests</td>
<td>states</td>
<td>refutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(leave a line)

Note. Table contents are representative list only. Adapted from A visual guide to essay writing by V. Rao et al., 2007, pp. 74-75. AALL.

Reference information is then reproduced in the reference list in APA format.
3. Figures

All graphical displays other than tables are considered figures in APA Style (APA 7th edition). A figure is an image or graphic information that encapsulates the point you are trying to make (e.g. photographs, diagrams, maps, graphs, drawings and flowcharts). These may be directly copied, modified/adapted from text descriptions or be entirely your own production. Number all figures with Arabic numerals in the exact order that you place them in your text. Place any explanatory legends with the figure.

Example: Figure copied with permission from the author

In-text

Students who are assisted with writing skills during assignment writing can show significant improvement in their assessment marks. Godwin (2004, pp. 24-26) describes an assignment intervention initiative whereby students who obtained less than 50% on the essay could resubmit, provided they consulted a study skills adviser at least twice. After resubmission, each student showed improvement in their mean score between 21.5 and 31.5 marks (see Figure 1). In the next semester, student results in assignments continued to show the same progress in their capabilities.

Figure 1

 Wilmington improvements from resubmission strategies

Note. Comparison of original and resubmission scores.

Reference information is then reproduced in the reference list in APA format.

4. Tables and figures in the appendices

Tables and figures can be placed in your Appendices section if they do not fit into your essay text. Begin Appendices on a new page after References with a centred, bold heading “Appendix A” and a Title on the next line. Place appendices in numerical order. When you refer to a table or figure from an appendix in the text of your essay or report, use the label Appendix (if only one) and Appendix A, Appendix B, Appendix C etc. (for more than one).

e.g. As shown in Appendix B, the choice of reporting verbs can reflect the considered position of an author, so writers must be careful to choose reporting verbs that reflect the author’s attitude to the topic.

See detailed instructions ASO factsheet Appendices