

TIPS AND BASICS ABOUT FIGURES, TABLES AND CAPTIONS

Start writing your paper by creating figures and writing the captions. Second, describe the figures. Third, write the rest of the methods, results and discussion sections. Write the introduction and the title last.

- Reflect on what you want to show the readers.
- Reflect on which format is suitable for the aspect and context: table, graph, diagram, image, etc.
- Use the same words to refer to the elements visualized in the figure that you use in the captions and the main text.
- Use consistent vocabulary. Do not worry about being repetitive. Be clear which element you are referring to.
- Figures/ tables with captions are self-explanatory: if your reader looks at your figure, the message should be clear without the text.
- Figures supply data, captions supply information to fully understand the figure.
- Delete all unnecessary words from the captions.
- Once you are finished with your figures they can be numbered consecutively according to your text topics. Tables are numbered separately.

- Figures are visual information.
- Figures and tables draw the user's attention: they operate as 'teasers'.
- Each figure or table presents one aspect of your results containing a specific statement. Multiaxial diagrams present different related aspects.
- Figures can be used to illustrate the research design, results and discussion.
- In some disciplines figures are the core aspect of presenting methods and results.
- Use current paper or articles as a style sheet.
- Make sure that all figures are also understandable in black-and-white print.

In dependence on:
Macgilchrist, Felicitas. Academic Writing, UTB, 2014.

Further information on our support services, writing advice, workshops, writing marathon, etc. on our website: www.tu-dresden.de/deinstudienerefolg/szd

Müller, Eva. Schreiben in den Naturwissenschaften und Medizin. UTB, 2013.

Concept: Writing Centre of TU Dresden, 2018