Incorporating Tables and Figures into a Document

Tables and figures allow the writer to communicate complicated data efficiently and clearly. Tables use a column and row structure; figures can be graphs, pictures, and any other kind of illustration. Both tables and figures are useful in business writing but need to be incorporated into your document correctly.

Use the following rules from the *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association 7th Ed.* (2020) to include tables and figures successfully into written documents:

1. Refer to tables/figures in the text of the paper, that is, explain why the table/figure is significant and what key points the reader should understand from the table. Do not explain every detail because the table or figure should speak for itself.

   - In the paper, tables/figures should be located near the text you are using to discuss them. They are there to help the reader understand the purpose of the work.

2. Label tables and figures based on when they appear in the text of your document. The table mentioned first should be labeled Table 1; the table mentioned second should be labeled Table 2, and so on. When referring to a table or figure, tell the reader for what to look, for example, "As shown in Table 1, the demographic characteristics…" (American Psychological Association, 2020, p. 197).

   - If tables/figures are included in an appendix, label them with the Appendix letter and the number that corresponds to their appearance in the appendix. The first figure in Appendix A would be labeled Figure A1; the second figure in Appendix C would be labeled Figure C2, and so on.

3. Properly cite all information contained in the tables or figures that are used.

4. Do not use a table/figure if the same information can be explained using text.

5. Keep tables concise. Do not include information the readers can easily calculate themselves.

6. Keep tables and figures consistent in formats, titles, headings, and terminology.

   - Table/figure titles should be concise but should explain the basic content of the table/figure.

   - Headings should also be concise and let the reader know how the information is organized.

Source: American Psychological Association. (2020). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association (7th ed.)* American Psychological Association.