



Discussion Sections in Research Articles (RAs) in English: A Rhetorical Moves¹ Model.

(Adapted from: Swales, J. (1990). *Genre analysis: English in academic and research settings*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; and Hopkins, A. & Dudley-Evans, T. (1988). A genre-based investigation of the discussion sections in articles and dissertations. *English for Specific Purposes*, 7(2), 113–121.)

NOTE: In RAs that use the IMRaD macro-structure to organize the research article (Introduction-Methods-Results-and-Discussion), the moves often occur in cycles. Keep in mind that the IMRaD structure and cyclical moves appear to be discipline specific.

MOVE 1. Background Information.

This move can occur at any point in the cycle and may include a return to key concepts and terminology, theoretical frameworks, or technical information introduced earlier in the RA. Sometimes authors make this move to help readers transition between sections (e.g., from Results to Discussion).

MOVE 2. Statement of Results.

This move is obligatory and often starts a cycle: authors often report the most significant results in the first cycle and less significant results in subsequent cycles.

MOVE 3. Reference to Previous Research.

In this move, authors compare results with those reported in the literature. Two common sub-types of reference to previous research are *comparison* of previous research with present research and *support* of previous research for present research. That said, keep in mind that authors refer to previous research in RAs for multiple and complex reasons and those reasons vary depending on the section of the RA where the reference occurs.

MOVE 4. Explanation.

Here, authors may suggest reasons for a surprising result, or reasons for a result that differs from those reviewed in the literature.

MOVE 5. Exemplification.

In this move, authors give an example to support or exemplify the explanation.

MOVE 6. Hypothesis.

In this discipline-specific move, the authors may make a generalizable claim arising from results.

MOVE 7. Recommendation.

Here, authors suggest future research. While the current research responds to the research gap/knowledge deficit or problem identified in the Introduction, in this move authors identify a new research gap. As a way to identify future research possibilities, consider the relationship between the study's limitations and future research.

MOVE 8. Justification. In this move, authors justify the need for future research. In some disciplines, this may occur as a call-to-action, and the call-to-action might take the form of an obligation on the part of the research community to carry out future work (e.g., “future research *must* address x, y, and z”).

¹ The term “move” refers to a segment of text with a particular purpose or function (e.g., background context; literature review; research question, problem, or hypothesis; and so on).