

## 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 many of the functional categories listed later in this section, the verbs are written in the simple past tense and are passive.

### Describing previously used methods

Many researchers have utilised X to measure ...  
One of the most well-known tools for assessing ...  
Traditionally, X has been assessed by measuring ...  
A number of techniques have been developed to ...  
Different methods have been proposed to classify ...  
X is the main non-invasive method used to determine ...  
Different authors have measured X in a variety of ways.  
Several methods currently exist for the measurement of X.  
Previous studies have based their criteria for selection on ...  
X is one of the most common procedures for determining ...  
There are three main types of study design used to identify ...  
The use of life story data has a relatively long tradition within X.  
Recent advances in X methods have facilitated investigation of ...  
There are a number of instruments available for measuring the ...  
X and Y are currently the most popular methods for investigating ...  
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 ...  
Xs have been used in the past to investigate the mechanical properties of ...  
Case studies have been long established in X to present detailed analysis of ...  
Since the 1950s, researchers have used a multitude of scientific methods to ...  
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 ...  
The methods for measuring X have varied somewhat across this research area.  
In recent years, molecular methods have been utilised for the quantification of ...  
A variety of methods are used to assess X. Each has its advantages and drawbacks.  
More recent examples of narrative studies within X can be found in the work of Smith (2010).  
Two of the most common methods for estimating X are the use of Y and the measurement of Z.

X studies Studies of X	have traditionally	employed ... based their approaches on ... used model systems to predict ... adopted functionalist perspectives utilised a population-based approach. relied upon participant observation as ...
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Various Different	methods have been	utilised to proposed to employed to	<p>assess ...</p> <p>test for...</p> <p>identify ...</p> <p>capture ...</p> <p>quantify ...</p> <p>measure ...</p> <p>determine ...</p> <p>investigate ...</p>
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### Giving reasons why a particular method was adopted

A major advantage of X is that ...

The benefit of this approach is that ...

The decision to use X was based on ...

X based methods provide a means of ...

X was selected for its reliability and validity.

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: ...

The advantages of Xs are that they are simple to deliver.

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 ...

Another advantage of using computer simulations is that it allows ...

Continuous sampling methods have a number of advantages over ...

The collaborative nature of the focus group offers another advantage ...

It was decided that the best method to adopt for this investigation was to ...

Qualitative methods can be more useful for identifying and characterising ...

Many of the distributions were not normal so non-parametric signed rank tests were run.

It was considered that quantitative measures would usefully supplement and extend the ...

A case-study approach was	used chosen adopted	<p>to ensure that ...</p> <p>to help understand how ...</p> <p>to allow a deeper insight into ...</p> <p>to conduct this exploratory study.</p> <p>to evaluate the effectiveness of ...</p> <p>to gain a detailed understanding of ...</p> <p>to determine the factors that affect ...</p> <p>to assess the management practices of ...</p> <p>to obtain further in-depth information on the ...</p> <p>to capture the complexities of the phenomenon.</p> <p>to provide rounded, detailed illustrations of the ...</p>
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A(n) The One	key major distinct obvious practical potential additional important significant	advantage	of using	Z-scores focus groups a rating scale secondary data self-report data longitudinal data retrospective data regression analysis natural speech data semi-structured interviews  a convenience sample a case study approach a comparative approach a mixed method approach a multidimensional approach	is that ...
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X is one of the most	successful widely-used commonly-used	methods techniques	for (used for)	dating ... gathering ... collecting ... evaluating ... estimating ... measuring ... identifying ... determining ...
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### Referring to the literature to justify a method or approach

In a recent article, Smith (2009) argues that case studies offer ...  
Smith *et al.* (1994) identify several advantages of the case study ...  
Jones (2012) argues that case studies are useful when the conditions of the research ...  
According to Smith (2011), semi-structured interviews have a wide-spread popularity in ...  
The sensitivity of the X technique has been demonstrated in a report by Smith *et al.* (2011).  
Jones (2006) points out that there is a role for both qualitative and quantitative approaches in ...

### Giving reasons why a particular method was rejected

The limitation of this approach is that ...  
A disadvantage of many cohort studies is that ...  
A major problem with the experimental method is that ...  
The main disadvantage of the experimental method is that ...  
The principal limitation of the experimental approach is that ...  
However, there are certain drawbacks associated with the use of ...  
However, this method clearly is not valid for analysing long-term trends in ...  
There are obvious difficulties in accepting the reliability of self-report information.  
There are certain problems with the use of focus groups. One of these is that there is less ...

### **Indicating a specific method**

The solution was then assayed for X using the Y method.  
X was prepared according to the procedure used by Jones *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 ...  
Samples were analysed for X as previously reported by Smith *et al.* (2012).  
Analysis was based on the conceptual framework proposed by Smith *et al.* (2002).  
This compound was prepared by adapting the procedure used by Jones *et al.* (1990).

### **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.  
The sample was representative with respect to gender and ...  
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.  
Eligible women who matched the selection criteria were identified by ...  
Only children aged between 10 and 15 years were included in the study.  
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...  
The participants in this study were recruited from ...  
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 in obtaining ...  
The subjects were selected on the basis of the degree of homogeneity of their ...  
A comparison group of 12 male subjects without any history of X was drawn from a pool of ...