

# Tips For Reading Research Articles

Reading research articles can provide insight into victims' needs, effective interventions, and service gaps. However, most journal articles are written for an audience of fellow researchers, so it can take some time for non-researchers to get familiar with the vocabulary used and the writing style. This tip sheet provides background information about research articles and suggested approaches to help you get started.

1. Research articles typically follow a similar format: **Abstract, Introduction, Methods/Procedures, Results, Discussion,** and **Conclusions/Implications** (more details on these sections on the following pages). Some researchers suggest starting with the abstract and discussion sections, followed by the introduction. Reading an article in this order can clarify the study's purpose and findings, before focusing on the more technical results and methods sections.
2. Look for phrases such as "we hypothesize" or "a goal of this study was" that alert you to the article's main points.
3. Review charts and diagrams closely for results.
4. Ask yourself questions about the researchers' approaches and their interpretations of results. For example, what was the scope of the research questions, and did the methods include diverse participants? These inquiries can help you think about how the results might apply outside of the study sample.
5. Take notes as you read and look up terms you don't know. The [CVR glossary](#) is a good starting place for definitions of research words frequently used in victim research.

Publisher  
Journal Title  
Journal Volume, Issue, Number, page range.  
URL or Digital Object Identifier

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## TITLE OF JOURNAL ARTICLE

Lead Author<sup>1</sup>, Another Author<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> University Department, University. <sup>2</sup> University Department, University

### Abstract

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The **title** and **keywords** provide a quick snapshot of the main topic, goals, and sometimes the main finding. Look at the **date** of the article; is this the most current research available?

The **first author** listed in social science papers is often the lead researcher or the team member who contributed most to writing the paper, designing the study, and/or analyzing results. Note the authors' professional affiliations.

### Introduction

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### Related Literature

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### Current study

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The **introduction** provides context for the study. The authors describe the challenges or issues related to the topic and what has been studied before. They will also explain how their study contributes to the larger knowledge base.

## Methods/Procedure

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Analysis Measures Scales Instruments Interview Survey Data Analysis Measures Sca  
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### Measure 1

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### Measure 2

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## Results

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**Table 1.** Characteristics of Subjects and Survey Results

Predictor	Outcomes
Characteristic	
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*Notes: about this chart or statistical analysis, other citations.*

## Discussion

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### Strengths/Limitations

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### Implications/Conclusion

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The **methods** or **procedure** section describes how the researchers gathered information. It describes measures used to collect data and characteristics of study participants. This section can help others interested in replicating the study.

This section also helps you think about the **strength of the findings and their applicability to other contexts**. Are victims' perspectives included? Are the populations included similar to populations you serve? You might find it helpful to sketch out how the researchers recruited people, who is in the sample, and so on.

The **results** section can include a lot of technical language and statistical concepts. Table and chart titles can provide helpful information regarding the findings.

Try reading the **discussion** first, as it can provide guidance through the denser results section. Think about how the results answer the researchers' questions. How might these findings apply to other situations?

## Discussion

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## Implications/Conclusion

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No single study can provide all the answers! The **discussion** section usually includes study limitations, implications for practitioners, and concluding thoughts about future directions for the research. Compare the authors' description of limitations with what you notice is missing. Think about what you would still like to know. What else needs additional study and attention? Reach out to the corresponding author if you have ideas or questions about the study.

Regularly reading research can enrich your work, from keeping up with emerging issues, to planning programs and outreach, to writing grant reports. Search for research articles in the [Center for Victim Research Library](#) and join the [Center for Victim Research Virtual Journal Club](#) to discuss research with researchers and service providers.

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