

# 11

## Writing Introductions, Results, and Conclusions

### SUGGESTED COURSE EXTENSIONS

#### ■ A. REVIEWING

1. Find a newspaper or magazine article that summarizes findings of a quantitative study. Critique it, using the principles in chapter 11 of *Writing about Numbers*.
  - a. Is there a clear introduction of the broad issues or questions to be investigated?
  - b. Do topic sentences introduce the purpose of each table, chart, or quantitative comparison?
2. Find a journal article about a quantitative study in your field. Critique it, using the principles in chapter 11 to check for the following.
  - a. Clear introduction of the broad issues or questions to be investigated
  - b. Review of the previous literature to identify theories and existing evidence
  - c. Topic sentences that introduce the purpose of each table, chart, or quantitative comparison
  - d. Descriptions of direction, magnitude, and statistical significance of associations
  - e. Good explanations of how specific numeric findings address the questions under study
  - f. A discussion and conclusions section that summarizes numeric findings and relates them back to the research question and to previous studies
  - g. Consideration of causality and substantive significance of findings in the conclusions

#### ■ B. WRITING

1. Write an introductory section for your paper following the guidelines in chapter 11.
2. Write the results section of your paper.
  - a. Organize the quantitative analysis into manageable chunks, each presented in a separate table or chart.
  - b. Use paragraphs and subheadings within the results section to organize written descriptions of each table or chart.
  - c. Write topic sentences that introduce the purpose of each table, chart, or quantitative comparison.

- d. Include generalizations about direction, magnitude, and statistical significance where relevant.
  - e. Write transition sentences to orient readers about how the different tables or charts relate to one another and to the overall research question.
3. Write the discussion and conclusions section of your paper, including
    - a. summaries of major numeric findings rather than repetition of detailed numbers from the results;
    - b. discussion of causality, statistical significance, and substantive significance of findings;
    - c. explanation of how those findings relate to initial hypotheses and to findings of other studies.
  4. Write a two- or three-page general interest article on the same topic, following the guidelines in chapter 11.

### ■ C. REVISING

1. Critique the introductory section of your paper, using the principles in chapter 11. Rewrite it to incorporate the changes you have identified.
2. Evaluate the results section of your paper using the criteria listed under question B.2. Rewrite the results section to incorporate the changes you have identified.
3. Critique the discussion and conclusions section of your paper using the criteria listed under question B.3. Rewrite it to incorporate the changes you have identified.
4. Exchange initial and revised drafts of the introductory, results and discussion sections with someone writing about a different topic or data. Peer-edit the work.