# Appendix: Text-tables

**European Association of Science Editors**

## Text-tables – effective tools for presentation of small data sets

Arranging statistical information in a classic table and referring to it elsewhere means that readers do not access the information as immediately as they would when reading about it within the sentence. They have to find the table in the document (which may be on another page), losing some time. This slightly decreases the strength of the information. Quicker access to the information can be achieved within a sentence, but this is not an effective structure if more than 2 numbers are to be compared. In such situations, a "text-table" appears to be ideal for communicating information to the reader quickly and comprehensibly (Tufte 2001). The text-table is a simple table with no graphic elements, such as grid lines, rules, shading, or boxes. The text-table is embedded within a sentence, so no reference to it is needed. Keeping the power of tabular arrangements, text-tables immediately convey the message. Look at the following examples.

**Original sentence:**
Iron concentration means (±standard deviation) were as follows: $11.2\pm0.3$ mg/dm$^3$ in sample A, $12.3\pm0.2$ mg/dm$^3$ in sample B, and $11.4\pm0.9$ mg/dm$^3$ in sample C.

**Modified:**
Iron concentration means (±standard deviation, in mg/dm$^3$) were as follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| sample B | $12.3\pm0.2$ |
| sample C | $11.4\pm0.9$ |
| sample A | $11.2\pm0.3$ |

**Original sentence**
After the treatment was introduced, mortality tended to decline among patients aged 20-39 y (relative reduction [RR] = 0.86/y; 95% CI 0.81–0.92; $P < 0.001$), 40 to 59 y of age (RR = 0.97/y; 95% CI 0.92–1.03; $P = 0.24$) and 60 to 79 y of age (RR = 0.92/y; 95% CI 0.86–0.99; $P = 0.06$).

**Modified:**
After the treatment was introduced, mortality tended to decline among patients in all age groups (RR stands for relative reduction per year):

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 20-39 y | RR = 0.86 | (95% CI 0.81–0.92; $P < 0.001$) |
| 40-59 y | RR = 0.97 | (95% CI 0.92–1.03; $P = 0.24$) |
| 60-79 y | RR = 0.92 | (95% CI 0.86–0.99; $P = 0.06$) |

**Some rules for arranging text-tables**
1. The larger a text-table is, the less power it has.
2. The sentence that precedes the text-table acts as a heading that introduces the information the text-table represents, and usually ends with a colon. Text-tables should have neither headings nor footnotes.
3. Indentation of text-tables should fit the document's layout.
4. Occasional changes in font (such as italics, bold, a different typeface) may be used, but with caution. They can, however, put some emphasis on the tabular part.
5. Do not use too many text-tables in one document or on one page.
6. In addition to the above rules, apply rules for formatting regular tables. For example, numbers should be given in 2-3 effective digits; ordering rows by size and their correct alignment will facilitate reading and comparison of values; space between columns should be neither too wide nor too narrow.

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# Practical tips for junior researchers

- Consider publishing a review article once you have completed the first year of your PhD studies because: (1) you should already have a clear picture of the field and an up-to-date stock of references in your computer; (2) research results sometimes take a long time to get (in agronomy: 3 years of field experiments...); (3) journals love review articles (they tend to improve the impact factor); (4) the rejection rate of review articles is low (although some journals publish solicited reviews only, so you might want to contact the Editor first); (5) the non-specialist reader - such as a future employer - will understand a review article more easily than an original article with detailed results.
- Alternatively, publish meta-analyses or other database-based research articles.

- Each part/item of an article should preferably be "almost" understandable (and citable) without reading other parts. The average time spent reading an article is falling, so virtually no one reads from Title to References. This phenomenon is amplified by the "digital explosion", whereby search engines identify individual items, such as abstracts or figures, rather than intact articles.

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**For more advice, see EASE Toolkit for Authors**
(www.ease.org.uk/publications/ease-toolkit-authors)