Journal Article Analysis  
(Articles based on research designs) 
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A journal article analysis usually consists of at least the following components:

1. Overview/abstract
2. Methodology description
3. Presentation of results
4. Explanation of conclusions made by the researchers
5. Personal perspective on any of the previously listed components

Normally, one paragraph per component suffices for a brief article analysis. In your courses, instructors may shape their specific assignments in some variation of the above; however, when there are no parameters provided, students are safe to follow the outline of the above components. Other assignments might work with the above outline but require more in-depth discussions, requiring more than one paragraph per component.

Here are some steps and clues to help your first experience in writing an article analysis.

Clues:

✓ Make sure you select a journal article that is based on a research design. If the article contains a hypothesis, methodology section, and data results, it will usually qualify.

✓ Make sure you understand the topic of the article and can read through it with minimal difficulty. Otherwise, you will spend too much time reading and understanding the article. Some articles are written much more clearly than others.

✓ Ask your librarian for assistance.

✓ Do not wait until the last day or two before the deadline.

✓ Students usually take at least two hours to find one article that works.
Once you have selected an article, follow these steps to read and extract appropriate information:

**Step One:** Identify the questions or hypothesis that the researchers are testing. Most of the time this can be found in an abstract before the article or the introduction to the article (many times in the last paragraph of the introduction). Sometimes the researchers have a complete hypothesis statement, but at other times, they may simply have questions without any prediction in the outcomes.

Highlight this information.
Put information in your own words. If specific vocabulary is used, you may use it but do not copy word for word from the abstract or article.

**Step Two:** Read and highlight the main ideas of the article. Often the articles are very detailed in the methodology and results, which can be confusing for a student who has not had nine hours of statistics. Main ideas include:

- **Questions or hypothesis (es)**

- **Methodology:** type of experiment, number of experimental groups if applicable; size of experimental groups; process for selecting groups; number of times experiment was run; type of case study (if it is a case study) and criteria to be measured. If applicable, describe the dependent and independent variables.

- **Results:** research will often state whether the results were significant or not significant statistically. Also, many times, even though there is a primary hypothesis, the researchers may have results from subgroups or items that show results they were not anticipating. First, concentrate on the results that answer the hypothesis or questions. If you can, then describe other results. Results are not what the researchers’ opinions of the outcomes, rather the actual data that is produced.

- **Conclusions or Discussion:** This is the “so what” of the research results. Many times the researchers discuss implications for further research or answers to solve problems.

**Step Three:** Organize the material you have highlighted, using the format on page 3. Draft an outline.
# Format for the Journal Article Analysis

## Paragraph One

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Present the hypothesis or questions and main concept explored in the article. | Complete title of article  
Title and volume/date of journal  
All the authors  
Hypothesis/questions  
General statement of results |

## Paragraph Two

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Describe the methodology | Type of experiment  
Variables  
Characteristics of the design  
Steps in the experiment |

## Paragraph Three

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Present the results. This is not a place for researchers’ conclusions or opinions. | Results that answer the hypothesis or questions  
Other results not anticipated by the researchers |

## Paragraph Four

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Present conclusions from the researchers. This is not where you present your opinions.</td>
<td>Conclusive statements made by the researchers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Paragraph Five

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Present your conclusions or reactions about the research based on the article, not general feelings. | Significance of the conclusions.  
Response to the conclusions.  
Application of the article to situations or material from the class. |
Writing Tips

1. When you are reading and extracting the information from the article, take the time to put the information in your own words then, not when you are trying to write the paper.

2. When you are presenting several ideas or steps in one paragraph, use a system like “first, second, third…”

3. Avoid using “I” in the personal response paragraph (last paragraph).

4. Visit the Success Center and set up an appointment with one of the psychology or sociology tutors or writing tutors.

5. Use plain language.

6. A scholarly way to begin the first paragraph is as follows:

   In the article (“complete title in quotation marks”), found in (complete journal name, date, vol. all italicized), (author names—include all the authors) hypothesize** that (what the authors predict will happen in the experiment). After conducting (a type of experiment/research), they conclude that (research conclusion).

   **If the authors do not use a hypothesis but have questions they are asking, then say: (author names) research the following questions about (main concept of the research): List each question.