

# Academic Phrase Bank for Research Reports

Use the following language guide to assist in creating sentences for each paragraph of your report. Don't forget to use the set of questions located in your class space to help create each section of your Lab report/Research report. Look at the marking criteria and identify what sections you need to include. Tick off each element of the marking criteria as you include it in your body paragraphs. Click [here](#) to see a sample Abstract and Introduction.

## Introduction

### Establishing the importance of the topic

Traditionally, Xs have subscribed to the belief that ....

Recent developments in X have heightened the need for .... In recent years, there has been an increasing interest in ....

Recent developments in the field of X have led to a renewed interest in ....

### Background information: reference to literature or to research aim/question

Prior studies that have noted the importance of ....

A strong relationship between X and Y has been reported in the literature.

In reviewing the literature, no data was found on the association between X and Y. The first systematic study of X was reported by Patel et al. in 1986.

One study by Smith (2014) examined the trend in ....

### Highlighting a problem

However, a major problem with this kind of application is ....

Lack of X has existed as a health problem for many years. However, these rapid changes are having a serious effect on ....

Despite its safety and efficacy, X suffers from several major drawbacks: However, research has consistently shown that these students lack ....

Along with this growth in X, however, there is increasing concern over ....

### **Indicating the gap in knowledge and possible limitations**

Few researchers have addressed the problem / issue / question of ... Previous work has only focused on / been limited to / failed to address ... A basic / common / fundamental /crucial / major issue of ...

Current solutions to X are inconsistent / inadequate / incorrect / ineffective / inefficient /over- simplistic / unsatisfactory

Many hypotheses regarding X appear to be ill-defined / unfounded / not well grounded /unsupported / questionable / disputable / debatable

The characteristics of X are not well understood / have not been dealt with in depth.

### **Research questions or hypotheses**

The hypothesis that will be tested is that ...

The research questions in this study focused on ...

The specific questions which drive the research are:

This research seeks to address the following questions:

### **Stating the purpose of research**

The major objective of this study was to investigate .... The aim of this study was to clarify several aspects of ....

The aim of this study is to investigate the differences between X and Y. The aim of this research project has therefore been to try and establish what ....The objectives of this research are to determine whether ....

### **Explaining Keywords (refer to Defining Terms)**

Throughout this paper, the term X will refer to ....

According to Smith (2002), X can be defined as follows: “....”

The term X is a relatively new name for ...., commonly referred to as ....

While a variety of definitions of the term X have been suggested, this paper will use the definition first suggested by Smith (1968) who saw it as ....

## Findings

### Statements of result: usually with reference to results section

The current study found that ....

The results of this study show/indicate that .... On the question of X, this study found that .... Another important finding was that ....

### Referring to tables and figures, and to their implications

Table 1 compares / lists / details / summarizes the data on X.

Table 2 proves / shows / demonstrates / illustrates / highlights that X is ...

## Discussion

### Reference to previous research: support

These findings further support the idea of .... This study confirms that X is associated with ....

The findings of the current study are consistent with those of Smith and Jones (2001) whoThis finding supports previous research into this brain area which links X and Y.

### Reference to previous research: contradict

However, the findings of the current study do not support the previous research.

This study has been unable to demonstrate that ....

In contrast to earlier findings, however, no evidence of X was detected.

Although, these results differ from some published studies (Smith, 1992; Jones, 1996), they are consistent with those of ....

### Explanations for results

There are several possible explanations for this result.

A possible explanation for these results may be the lack of adequate .... These factors may explain the relatively good correlation between X and Y. These differences can be explained in part by the proximity of X and Y.

### **Being cautious when explaining results**

This inconsistency may be due to ....

This discrepancy could be attributed to ....

A possible explanation for this might be that .... It seems possible that these results are due to ....

### **Noting implications**

An implication of this is the possibility that ....

One of the issues that emerges from these findings is ....

Some of the issues emerging from this finding relate specifically to ....

These results provide further support for the hypothesis that ....

### **Introducing questions, problems and limitations: method/practice**

One major drawback of this approach is that ....

Another problem with this approach is that it fails to take X into account.

Perhaps the most serious disadvantage of this method is that ....

However, there are limits to how far the idea of/concept of X can be taken.

### **Limitations of the current study**

First, .... The findings in this report are subject to at least three limitations. The most important limitation lies in the fact that ....

The current study has only examined .... The current investigation was limited by ....

### **Offering constructive suggestions**

A more comprehensive study would include all the groups of ....

A much more systematic approach would identify how X interacts with other variables that are believed to be linked to ....

Further research should be done to investigate the ....

A further study with more focus on X is therefore suggested.

## Academic Writing

### Comparing and contrasting literature

To strengthen [critical analysis](#) in your report, you will need to not only summarise the previous studies but also identify relationships and themes in the literature by [comparing research](#) studies. Use a [reference summary template](#) to assist with this process.

Consider the following:

- To what extent is the area of focus in the investigations similar or different?
- How do the methodologies used by the authors compare?
- What conclusions are reported by the authors? How do they compare?
- How do the conclusions and findings add to/support/contradict the existing knowledge of the issue being examined?

### Cautious Language/ Hedging

Hedging or using cautious language demonstrates you are applying critical thinking. It helps you to present a strong argument.

- Hedges can be used to withhold your full commitment to a statement. Examples of hedges include ***may; might; possibly; likely; seemed to; appeared to***
- Boosters reveal your certainty about a statement. Examples of boosters include ***clearly; definitely; without doubt***
- Attitude markers reveal your attitude towards a statement. Examples of Attitude markers include ***interestingly; surprisingly; unfortunately***

Click [here](#) for more information on hedging.

### Punctuation rules

Good punctuation is crucial for successful academic writing as it helps you communicate your ideas clearly, accurately and precisely. To review punctuation including the use of commas, semicolons and colons click [here](#). It is advisable to run your paper through [Grammarly](#) and check your [Turnitin](#) report to assist in the proofreading process.

## Linking words

Transitions are words, phrases or sentences that make your writing easier to follow. They help by making clear the connections between sentences and paragraphs and indicate the flow of your ideas. They also signal to the reader how to approach the information that follows.

### Time/sequence

initially  
first of all  
firstly, secondly  
next/then  
meanwhile  
while  
up to now  
before/before that  
formerly  
previously  
prior to  
after/afterwards  
thereafter  
subsequently  
lastly/finally  
simultaneously

### Addition

again  
and/and then  
also  
besides  
furthermore  
additionally  
in addition  
moreover  
not only...but also  
as well as  
once again  
apart from this  
another

### Cause & Effect

hence  
therefore  
consequently  
as a consequence  
accordingly  
as a result  
because  
because of this  
for this reason  
in that case  
since  
thus

### Generalisation

in general  
in most cases  
usually  
frequently  
mainly  
on the whole  
as a rule  
for the most part  
typically

### Conclusion

in brief  
in conclusion  
to conclude  
in summary  
summing up  
on the whole  
finally  
therefore  
thus  
in short

### Contrast

however  
nevertheless  
yet/and yet  
on the other hand  
though/although  
even though  
otherwise  
conversely  
while  
instead  
in contrast  
alternatively  
either...or

### Comparison

similarly/similar to  
by comparison  
likewise  
correspondingly  
equally important  
in the same way  
whereas  
as well as

### Example/analogy

in other words  
for example  
for instance  
such as  
as follows  
that is to say  
in this case  
to demonstrate  
to illustrate

### Highlighting

in particular  
particularly  
especially  
mainly

### Conditional

if/even if  
unless  
whether  
as long as  
supposing

### Referring

who  
which  
when  
where  
whose

### Concession

nevertheless  
despite  
although  
however

## Proofreading

### Editing and proofreading

Now that you have a piece of writing that is well structured, you can move on to the revising, editing and proofreading phases. It's often useful to start by reading each paragraph out aloud.

Here is a checklist of things to look out for when examining each sentence.

- Are all sentences really sentences? That is, do all sentences have a subject and a verb that the subject refers to?
- Are there vague or imprecise terms that could be replaced by more precise words or phrases?
- Are there words that could be removed without any loss of meaning? Is each word there for a reason?
- Are tenses used correctly?
- Can you make more use of the active voice?
- Is punctuation used correctly? Do you need more or fewer commas? Do you need to shorten your sentences? Would your ideas/writing flow better if ideas were combined into longer sentences?
- Is there need for more transition words and signposts for the reader? Are transition words overdone?
- Are most of your sentences between 15 and 20 words long?

Adapted from: Azariadis, M. (2011). Academic writing in practice.

[http://www.postgraduate.uwa.edu.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0003/518133/AW3\\_AcademicWritingPractice\\_MA\\_300911.pdf?utm\\_content=bufferc8d17&utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_source=facebook.com&utm\\_campaign=buffer](http://www.postgraduate.uwa.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/518133/AW3_AcademicWritingPractice_MA_300911.pdf?utm_content=bufferc8d17&utm_medium=social&utm_source=facebook.com&utm_campaign=buffer)