

Overview

Captions

Table and figure captions should start with a bold sentence describing, at a high level, what is being shown in the figures/tables.

Figure captions should be followed up with a clear description of the figure: what each of the axes represent, the colors of the points/lines, etc. Each panel, if it is a multi-panelled figure, should be described separately. Some writers add a sentence at the end describing the main take home point of the figure.

Table captions should include a careful description of what is meant by each row/column, and any details about data in the table (Why are cells missing or out-of-bounds numbers?).

Citing in text

I tend to ascribe very closely to rules about citing in text. Not everyone follows these rules as closely as I do.

- citations (both paper, and figures/tables) should not be used as nouns.
- citations to figures and tables should be in parenthesis at the end of the sentence describing the analysis that lead to that figure.
- borrowing any more than about three words from a paper means you put that phrase in quotes and cite the paper from which it came.
- cite often and freely. Giving respect to related work, or thoughtful work for that matter, never goes unappreciated (by me, as a reader).
- any rules about limits to bibliography *can always be broken* if the publication source is one you respect.
- rules about limits to figures/tables cannot be broken as easily. Try to ascribe to these; use supplemental material if you have information-rich figures and tables that don't work in the main text.