



UiO : **CEMO** – Centre for Educational Measurement
University of Oslo

The **Writing Plot**

Framing the Narrative of a Research Paper



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Why?

- Informs the structure of the paper.
- Helps argue for a research design.
- Tailors the discussion and conclusions.
- **Makes the writing of the introduction easier.**

Plot#1

Which one is right?

Compare two or more things against each other and sort out which one is right.

Examples:

- Testing two competing theories
- Simulation studies on the performance of two methods

Section 1

Describe why smart and reasonable people believe in the first approach.

Section 2

Discuss articles, ideas, and arguments that this approach may be problematic.

Section 3

Develop the second approach and present arguments for it.

Section 4

Describe how you will empirically evaluate which one is right.

[Kossakowski et al. \(2021\)](#)

(Silvia, 2015, Write It Up, pp. 87-90)

Plot#2

Here is how it works

Illustrate the inner workings of a finding, a process or mechanism.

Examples:

- We know an effect exists, but we don't know why.
- Mediation, moderation, causation

Section 1

Review the evidence establishing the effect/process and that it matters.

Section 2

Propose your model/process in a brief and reasonable overview.

Section 3

Describe how you will empirically evaluate the effect/process.

[Basarkod et al. \(2022\)](#)

(Silvia, 2015, Write It Up, pp. 87-90)

Plot#3

Things that seem similar are different (or vice versa)

Integrate or differentiate two things.

Examples:

- Two constructs are the same: grit and perseverance
- Two measures are different

Section 1

Discuss why we may believe that two things are similar/different (balanced!).

Section 2

Describe why you believe that they are instead different/similar.

Section 3

Describe how you will test the similarity or difference.

[Marsh et al. \(2019\)](#)

(Silvia, 2015, Write It Up, pp. 92-93)

Plot#4

Here is something new

Demonstrate something new that deserves attention.

Examples:

- Demonstrate a new effect: Attitude-achievement paradox
- Moderator, phenomenon, construct

Section 1

Set the stage for the new idea: (a) What do we currently know? (b) Why is this new idea useful/interesting?

Section 2

Describe that the new idea is reasonable: Evidence? Why should this work?

Section 3

Describe how you will demonstrate the new thing empirically.

[Liu & Yuan \(2021\)](#)

(Silvia, 2015, Write It Up, pp. 93-95)

Let's exercise.

