# How to Write a Discussion Section

***Where does it fit****?* – The Discussion section follows the Results section in the IMRaD format (Introduction, Methods, Results, and Discussion). In some cases, Summary and/or Conclusions sections might follow a Discussion section, or they could be included in the Discussion section.

***Before Writing*** –

- *Understand and Organize* –
    - List the argument(s) you intend to make based on your results/data. Do the results/data support your argument(s)?
    - Organize your arguments into a logical order. Usually one discussion point will naturally lead to the next.
    - If you write your introduction before this, make sure to address any of the questions you introduced there.

***While Writing*** – A discussion section should be a narrative intended to interpret the results and explain their significance and implications. In the Results section you *presented* the results, whereas in the Discussion section, you explain *what the results mean*. If you include a Summary/Conclusions section, these may contain bulleted lists, and generally appear at the end of the Discussion.

- Discuss the meaning, significance, and implications of the results
- Make sure to connect directly to the facts/data in your Results section.
- Compare your results to previous work from other authors for context. Do your results agree with theirs? If so, what does that mean? If not, why?
- Summarize the conclusions that can be drawn from the work.
- If appropriate, you sometimes:
    - List recommendations for: improving results, additional experiments, how to utilize the conclusions, and areas where work is still needed
    - List actions that should be taken as a result of the conclusions
    - List additional activities that should be done to reduce uncertainty or add additional important information

***After Writing*** – Always check to make sure your arguments are supported by data and logic.

- Have you addressed any questions posed in the Introduction section?
- Have you referenced specific results from your Results section to support your arguments?
- Do the accuracy and uncertainty of your results/data allow the conclusion to be made?
- Do your arguments follow a natural and logical order/progression?
- Are the recommendations based on and supported by sound conclusions?
- Are the recommendations for additional work worthwhile or justifiable?