Annotating a Journal Article

Journal articles are different than conventional articles from newspapers, magazines, and online. They often can be very challenging to read.

Journal articles follow different rules based on the subject or discipline they address. Those written for the humanities use MLA and CMS style and are structured like an essay, while other journal articles follow APA guidelines for organization, writing, and citation.

Characteristics of Journal Articles:
1. Published quarterly in print journals or online
2. Paid or free
3. Peer-reviewed
4. Strict guidelines for organization, writing, & citations
5. Research- and evidence-based
6. Written for specialists

MLA or CMS Style
- Organized like an essay, with or without headings, and have the following sections:
  - Introduction
  - Body
  - Conclusion
  - Bibliography or Works Cited
  - Appendices (if necessary)
- Use MLA or CMS citation style for layout, citation, & documentation
- Value eloquence and good prose
- Make and support arguments
- Cite primary and secondary sources
- Use in English, History, Modern Languages, and Philosophy studies

APA Style
- Complex organization with defined subheadings
- Use APA style for layout, citation, and documentation
- Value precise language and use of specialized terminology
- Propose and test hypotheses
- Cite relevant research and describe the results of an experiment
- Use in Education, Medicine, Natural Sciences, Social Sciences studies

Common Structure for an APA-Style Journal Article:
- Title & Author(s)
- Abstract: Summarize the article
- Key Words
- Introduction
  - Describe the topic
  - Identify the problem
  - Provide a literature review
  - Define the theoretical approach
  - State the hypothesis
- Method
  - Describe the model used
  - Describe what was done
- Results
  - Share data (often with tables and figures)
  - Describe results
- Discussion (and/or Conclusion)
  - Interpret the results
  - Draw conclusions
  - Identify limitations
  - Share ideas for future areas of study
- References
- Appendices (if necessary)
- Table and/or figures (if necessary, may also be included in the body of the article)

Two Types of APA-Style Journal Articles:
1. Literature Review:
   - Summarize a body of research on a specific topic
2. Experimental Report:
   - Convey the results of an experiment

Other things you should do as you read and annotate text:
- Paraphrase important information
- Write down thoughts and questions
- Write down key terms
- List and lookup new vocabulary terms
- Identify other articles to read

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