

## Referring to Tables, Charts, and Graphs

An important way to help your reader understand your ideas is to include tables, graphs and charts. However, in order to maximize their effectiveness, you must help your reader understand the point or points they illustrate and the reasons you have chosen to use them. Below are several suggestions for including graphic material in your text:

1. **Refer to the table, graph or chart within the text.** Example: "As we can see in table 1, the differences between mice and men are surprising."
2. **Indicate its purpose and the main point it is intended to illustrate.** Example: "Table 1 provides a 'top-down' view of the mice/men controversy, and makes the distinction between man's physical strength and the mouse's native intelligence clear."
3. **Explain how to read it.** Example: "Columns 1, 3 and 5 are the factors used in determining the strength, intelligence and personal grooming habits of men. Columns 2, 4 and 6 are the mouse's factors in the same groupings."
4. **Select an illustrative section and focus the reader's attention on its significance and the point it illustrates; then, if appropriate, select another illustrative section.** Example: "Note that in the matter of personal grooming, men take twice as long to complete personal grooming activities as mice. However, the time it takes a man to groom is influenced by his size and body weight, so that when equalizing variables are factored in, both men and mice spend an equivalent amount of time on grooming. In table 2 the grooming habits of women are tested against the man and mouse factors...."
5. **When comparing and contrasting, use sentences that incorporate the strategy of parallel structure to aid the reader's understanding and to illustrate your point.** Example: "It would seem that men are intellectually inferior when compared to mice, just as mice are intellectually inferior when compared to women."