

Psychology Coursework

Instructions for Writing the Report

1. Title Page: This must indicate what the study is about. It **must** include the IV & DV.

2. Contents page

3. Abstract: (you write this last)

The abstract comes at the beginning of your report but is written at the **end**. It should aim to explain very briefly the following:

One sentence of background information; the aim / hypothesis for the study; what research method was used; information about the sample; brief detail of what Ps had to do; results including some data; conclusion in terms of the hypothesis; general conclusion in relation to aim.

4. Introduction:

- Introduce broad area, e.g. memory
- Introduce the specific topic to be explored, e.g. capacity of STM
- Define key terms, e.g. STM
- **Briefly describe key theory and/or studies in the area**
- End with a study most similar to the one you are carrying out.
- Statement of aim "to investigate the effect of IV on DV"
- Statement of hypothesis in one sentence - including the IVs & DV.

5. Method

Assume the reader has no knowledge of what you did and ensure that he/she would be able to replicate (i.e. copy) your study exactly by what you write in this section. Write in the past tense.

USE THE FOLLOWING SUBHEADING:

Design - State the experimental design, IV and DV. Say what the IV conditions were and what Ps had to do (i.e. their task). Identify at least one extraneous variable; say how it could have affected the results if you hadn't controlled it. Finally, say what you did to control the EV.

Participants - Identify the target population (refer to a geographic location) and type of sample. Say how you obtained your sample and why you chose this sample. Give relevant details, e.g. how many, age range, background etc.

Materials - Describe the materials used, e.g. pictures, word lists, instructions, debrief, record sheets etc. Give plenty of detail and explain why you chose these things. Tell the reader they are in the appendix.

Procedure - Describe the precise procedure you followed when carrying out your experiment i.e. exactly what you did. Anyone should be able to copy what you did from this. Include the brief, standardise instructions and debrief - all word for word. Start with a sentence like "Participants were approached in the college library and asked if..." Clearly refer to at least one ethical issue you considered and say what you did about it (use BPS terminology)

6. Results:

- Calculate the mean, mode, range and SD etc.
- Display your result in an appropriate **summary table** (with title).
- Make sure all calculations show workings, and put them in the **appendix**. A table of **raw data** should also go in the appendix.

- Use a suitable **graph**. The DV and Both IV conditions should be included in the graph title. Remember to label the axis (inc. units).
- Include a **verbal summary** of what the graph shows. Say whether or not the results for the two IV conditions vary, e.g. "Notice from table 1 that the mean for the organisation condition is higher than the mean for the random condition".

7. Discussion :

- Relate your results to your hypothesis, have you accepted the hypothesis or rejected it.
- Compare your results to background materials from the introduction section. Are your results similar or different? Discuss why.
- Say what your findings mean for the way people behave in the real world.
- Identify limitations of your study, e.g. stimulus material used, sampling method etc.
- Suggest constructive ways to improve your study.
- Suggest an idea for further research triggered by your study, something in the same area, but not simply an improved version of yours. Perhaps you could change one of the variables (IV or DV).
- Concluding paragraph - restate the aim/hypothesis and say what was found.

8. References:

These are the textbooks, websites or journals that you have used (i.e. read) to write up your report (e.g. introduction section).

References need to be set out "Harvard" style:

Books:

Family name, first initial(s). (year) Title. Publisher.

Bloggs, J. (1992). Psychology. Hodder and Staughton.

References must be in **alphabetical order** of surname.

9. Appendix:

- Appendix 1 - Materials (e.g. word lists)
- Appendix 2 - Standardised Instructions and Debrief
- Appendix 3 - Raw Data Table
- Appendix 4 - Calculations (e.g. mean, standard deviation)
- Appendix 5 - Participant Answer Sheets (just a small sample)

Phrases to avoid:

You should write in the third person, don't say "I" or "Me". "I think that..." could become "It could be that..."