

# Experimental Psychology - Term Paper #2 Instructions

## Overview

- Write an APA-style proposal for a research experiment
  - Sections: Cover page, Abstract, Introduction, Hypotheses (optional), Method, Anticipated Results & Discussion
  - Can work alone or in a pair with someone in your lab section
    - If working in a pair, both people will get the same grade. Both people should understand and take responsibility for all aspects of the paper.
    - If completing a Writing Intensive, review those requirements
- Proposed study must be experimental
  - Experiment should include at least two categorical independent variables that are experimentally manipulated, and at least one continuous dependent variable
  - The study should be highly feasible. Hypothetically it should be possible for you to conduct the study during a one-month period, using readily available research participants (e.g. Tulane students). The study should be interesting but non-controversial.
  - Include at least five references to primary empirical articles (not just review articles). Referenced studies can be correlational or experimental.
- Late papers can be submitted by e-mail before midnight (email your lab instructor – Heather or Jenny – and CC Mike) and will be marked 30% off; bring a hard copy to Mike at the next scheduled lecture. Late papers will not be accepted after midnight. Backup your work by email and/or flash drive to avoid disasters.

## APA-style Report

- Use the template from the Term Paper section of the course web site (this paper uses a slightly different template than the first paper). Feel free to copy directly from anything I have posted online
- Consult the sample papers from the previous assignment for general APA format considerations.
- Most journal articles use a similar format.

## I. Cover page

- See template; follow formatting exactly.

## II. Abstract

- *Maximum* of 120 words (do not exceed this limit; it can be tricky). Begin with a general statement about why the domain of research is significant or important. Summarize the introduction of the paper. Briefly describe the proposed sample of participants. Indicate your anticipated findings. Describe why the study is important. Conclude by noting any limitations to the study, or by suggesting the next step for future research.

### **III. Introduction**

- At least 400-600 words
- Cite 5 sources or more (see VII. References Page)
- Begin with a compelling statement describing why this area of research is important
- Move from general to specific. Begin by describing the importance of this area of research. Why should we care about this research? Next, describe the limitations, weaknesses, or unanswered questions from past research. Then, indicate how this study helps to answer new questions or build on past research. Conclude by describing the specific hypotheses under study.
- Any claim that is not “common knowledge” should be supported with references, logic, and theory
- Avoid statements, such as “I think” or “I believe” – focus on the reasoning behind your beliefs, explaining why your hypotheses are reasonable and worth studying

### **IV. Hypotheses (optional)**

- No page limit. This section is optional, but often it is helpful to have a specific section listing out the hypotheses in order to make those hypotheses clearer
- Helpful if you have many hypotheses or very complex hypotheses
- Also helpful for students who may have difficulty clearly describing their hypotheses naturally in the introduction
- A diagram can also be helpful for expressing hypotheses

### **V. Method**

- No page limit
- Participants. Describe who you will recruit and your expected sample size.
- Procedures. Describe what the experiment entails, including any experimental manipulations used. To get an idea for how this is done, look over the method section of published journal articles. Ideally, a researcher should be able to look at your method section and re-create the experiment
- Measures. Describe any specific measures you plan to use in the study. Cite the measures you will use, or make your own and attach them as an Appendix.

### **VI. Anticipated Results and Discussion**

- 200-400 words, plus any graphs or figures
- Include how you would analyze the results (t-test, ANOVA, etc.)
- Describe your expected findings.
- Include at least one graph depicting your expected results. You can make the graph using SPSS, Excel, or a similar program.
- Describe the implications of your study, assuming your proposed results hold true.
- Describe the implications of your study, assuming your proposed results do not hold true.
- Note any methodological limitations of the study, such as potential problems involving validity or reliability.

## **VII. References Page**

- Minimum of 5 references to primary empirical articles (articles that describe methods and results for studies conducted by the authors). Although review articles, books, magazines, and newspapers can be cited, they are not included in the 5-count.
- APA-format
- Do not use web sites or dictionaries as sources
- Cite sources in the introduction and again in the discussion section

## **Plagiarism / Citing Correctly**

- Citations: Cite a source any time you express an idea that is not your own and is not “common knowledge”
- Citation + page number: In addition to the citation, include the page number any time you quote, paraphrase closely, or cite a statistic, number, figure, or key fact.
- Quotation Marks: All quotes must be in quotation marks! Also, include the citation with page number.
- General strategy: When in doubt, cite a source or double-check with Mike and/or the lab instructor. Avoid excessive quoting by summarizing findings in your own words.
- These rules are very specific and can be tedious, but ignoring these rules is defined as plagiarism, which has serious consequences, including failing the course.