

Research Methods Paper



INTRODUCTION

Independent research allows AP Psychology students the opportunity to explore a topic of personal interest, and delve into greater detail on the chosen topic than we would have time to cover as an entire class. For this assignment you must select one topic of interest to conduct research over. For this project, you may choose to do an experiment, a correlation study, or a survey (as long as it is school appropriate.) You must collect your data using either an experiment, a survey or a naturalistic observation and ***your method must meet the ethical criteria set by me. All topics must be approved before conducting ANY research.*** Complete each part as listed below and adhere strictly to the directions.

Paper

Your research paper, to be submitted electronically, should be 5 pages typed, double-spaced with a font size of 12 (Times New Roman), not counting the cover page, tables or references pages. Your research should include a minimum of 5 references, with at least 2 references coming from either books or professional journal articles.

Your research paper is to be prepared in APA format, and as such should include the following organizational elements:

1. 1" margins all around
2. Title page centered horizontally and vertically - including a title, your name, date, class and teachers name
3. Abstract - second page - The abstract is a *brief* overview of the entire paper. Although it is at the beginning of your paper, you should write it ***last!*** It should include 1-2 sentences on each of the following: 1) summary of background research (from the introduction), 2) statement of the topic of your study (from the introduction), 3) statement of hypothesis (from the introduction), 4) summary of results, and 5) comment about bias or extraneous variables. It is usually 150 words or less.
4. In-text citations/references within the document in APA format (NOT footnotes, but author and year in parenthesis)
5. Reference/source page after the report (not numbered, but alphabetical by author's last name)

Your paper should address the following information within the body of your paper:

1. **Introduction** – The introduction contains each of these components
 - a. Detailed background information on your topic including things you’ve witnessed, noticed, facts.
 - b. A statement of your topic with a compelling argument for why this topic is interesting or relevant.
 - i. What is the significance of this topic/problem? Why is it important for people to understand? What areas of mental or physical health may it have an impact on? What is already known about this topic/problem? What questions remain unanswered?
 - c. A statement of your hypothesis = null and testable.
 - i. The testable hypothesis predicts how the operationally defined variables are related.
 - ii. The null hypothesis is the prediction that one variable will have no association to the other variable - it is valid unless contradicted by the results.
 - d. The predictions for the results along with a rationale of how the predictions flow from the hypothesis.
2. **Method** – This section details exactly how the researcher conducted the study and who served as participants. All the information necessary to repeat the study generally appears in this section. The Method section includes information about the independent and dependent variables. The complete procedure used to administer the **independent variable**, control **confounding variables**(if you did not do this- you will need to write about it it “would have done differently section”, and measure the **dependent variable** is described in this section. Provide an **operational definition** of the dependent variable. This is also where you will explain how you fulfilled ethical obligations, such as informed consent, confidentiality, and debriefing. A copy of your standardized procedures “rough “sheet should be stapled on the back of your paper.) *If you use a survey or any visual aid/photos, your items must also be stapled to your paper.*
3. **Results** – Researchers report what they’ve found in this section. This includes data tables, graphs, and statistical information in addition to a written summary of the results. Tables and graphs should be labeled (“Table 1”) and include a caption about what it is comparing.
4. **Discussion** – The discussion section contains three main things: 1) a conclusion statement (was the hypothesis supported?), 2) a critique of the study, and 3) statements on what you would do differently. The bulk of the discussion focuses on #2 (critique). In your critique, you should analyze the strength of your conclusion by identifying possible sources of error or bias in your experiment and explain how these may have affected your data. You may also include alternate explanations for how to interpret your results.

****See directions on the next page for each method of research.****

For Surveys ONLY: Create 10 questions that you can ask your audience (your classmates) that go with your hypothesis - population size (random or stratified) should be no less than 15 people, and you should not include questions in regards to demographics unless it is a component of the research. You must state in the directions of the survey that by participating the subjects are providing informed consent to participate in the research, maintain confidentiality and state what you plan on doing with the results of your research.

- a. Create an account on surveymonkey.com
- b. Click sign up for free account
- c. Click just for fun
- d. Click create survey
- e. When you are done with your questions hit next
- f. You will have a choice, click web link
- g. Copy and paste the web link into an email to me. I will add the links to your survey onto the class website.

For Experiments and Naturalistic Observations: You must abide by the ethics set forth by the APA including that the experiment cannot cause harm or risk of injury to the subject(s) along with your research should not interfere with another class as well as your research must be school appropriate. You must obtain informed consent (experiments ONLY) , maintain confidentiality (with both methods) and state what you plan on doing with the results of your research (experiments ONLY).

Grading

- Cover Page - 5 points
- APA Style and Format - 10 points
- Grammar and Spelling -10 points
- Content - 100 points
- Survey Participation - 15 points
- References - 10 points

Total - 150 points

Due Date for Research Paper _____

Note: Participation points will be given each day that we are in the computer lab working on the assignment. Any time that you have to be redirected, points will be deducted.

Research Options - You must notify Mr. Fulton before you start your research. If a topic that you are interested in is not listed below, you must get approval before beginning your research.

1. Listening to music makes you more violent
2. Teens like group work
3. Diet affects your mood
4. Disney movies give false expectations in regards to relationships
5. Digital media affects the way we communicate face to face
6. Divorced parents affect your relationship with others
7. Type A personalities have more success at school
8. Role of the environment in the development of personality
9. Addiction: influences of genetics vs. peers/environment
10. Research the literature on the psychological and physical benefits of laughter
11. The validity of psychological tests
12. Collectivist vs. individualistic cultures
13. Interpersonal attraction: causes, gender differences; is there an “ideal”?
14. Gender differences and the brain - separating actual differences from stereotypes
15. Childhood trauma: impact on personality/role in personality disorders
16. Race and intelligence
17. Possible causes of childhood autism
18. How is intelligence measured
19. Alzheimer’s disease: causes, treatment and role lifestyle plays
20. Contact sports and degenerative brain disease
21. Aging: changes to brain, implications, opportunities and challenges
22. Does money buy happiness? psychological health and socioeconomic status
23. Bullying: causes, who gets bullied; what can parents/teachers do to stop it?
24. The effects of overcrowding on human beings
25. Subliminal messages and how they can be used to influence thought and behavior
26. Psychological effects of torture
27. Psychological effects of war
28. How are children affected by war
29. The psychological benefits of pets and pet therapy
30. Psychological problems of paraplegics
31. Behavior patterns of hyperactive children
32. The Stages of Grief

33. Attractiveness and bias: are attractive people treated differently?
34. The effects of color on mental states
35. Managing interpersonal conflict: psychology of mediation
36. Shyness in adults
37. How children develop gender identification
38. The psychological profile of a terrorist
39. The clinical uses of hypnosis
40. Eating disorders
41. Hate crimes: impact on victims and on communities
42. Brain damage and behavior
43. Dreams and dream interpretation
44. The limits of artificial intelligence
45. The psychological problems of the homeless
46. How does social anxiety disorder effect the routine life of a person?
47. Cyber bullying: psychological impact and recommended responses
48. ADHD: latest research and recommended treatment
49. The link between exercise and emotional health
50. Anger management: what makes psychological treatment effective?
51. Creativity and intelligence: what makes kidis creative and is it measured by intelligence tests
52. Violence in the media: psychological effects on children
53. Birth order: does it affect personality?
54. Psychological profile of a serial killer: what do they have in common - neurologically? personalities?
family history?
55. Antisocial personality disorder: influences of nature vs. nurture; prominence in the criminal justice
system
56. Psychology behind attraction: how marketing professionals influence consumer choices
57. Test anxiety
58. Psychological reasons for depression
59. Influence of parenting styles
60. Musical preferences and personality
61. Conformity: gender? age? group size?
62. The Bystander Effect
63. Dating violence among teens
64. Which is the better motivator: punishment or reinforcement?
65. The influence of social media on social interaction