

AS Coursework (PYB3)

Instructions for Writing the Report

Maximum word count: 1500

Writing style

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

Title Page:

The title should be clear, precise and accurate. The best approach is to write a sentence that includes the variables under investigation.

Abstract: (you write this last)

You should write this last, but present it first - it is a brief and clear summary of the whole report. It should be about 150 - 200 words long (one paragraph); and include all of the following:

- Brief outline of the background theory and research on which the investigation is based, don't just write "based on Bower's Experiment", add "who found that....."
- The aim and hypothesis of the investigation;
- Details of the research method used; for example, experiment/observation and the design chosen, as in repeated measures or independent groups etc.;
- Sampling method and sample of participants;
- Results of the investigation, including appropriate descriptive statistics (e.g. mean);
- Statement of whether the hypothesis was accepted or rejected;
- The conclusion drawn in relation to the results obtained.

Introduction: 400 Words

- 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.

Method: 400 - 600 Words

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 subheadings:**

Design – State the experimental design. Identify both the IV conditions. State the DV and how it was measured. Identify at least one extraneous variable; say how it could have affected the results if you hadn't controlled it (e.g. fewer words recalled). Finally, say what you did to control the EV. If you didn't control the EV (don't worry) say why it was not possible.

Participants – Identify the target population (refer to a geographic location). Say how you obtained your sample (e.g. opportunity sample) and why you chose this method. 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).

Results: 100 - 150 Words

- 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 of not the results for the two IV conditions vary, e.g. “*Notice from table 1 that the mean number for words recalled for the organisation condition is higher (18.2) than the mean for the random condition*” (9.1).

Discussion: 400 - 500 Words

- 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.
- 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).

Write a concluding paragraph – What does it all mean? State your conclusion(s). Mention implications of your findings. For example, say what your findings mean for the way people behave in the real world.

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 City: publisher

Bloggs, J. (1992). 'Psychology'. London: Hodder and Stoughton.

Journal articles:

Family name, initials. (Year). Title. Journal Name, volume number & page references

Bloggs, J. (1991). 'Writing effective reports'. International Journal of Coursework, 3, 57-59.

References must be in alphabetical order of surname.

Appendices:

- Appendix 1 – Materials (e.g. word lists)
- Appendix 2 – Brief, 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)

Print your report single sided, hole punch it and secure the pages together with two treasury tags.

Other Points

Don't waffle. A good report style requires conciseness.

Do present the report carefully. Use clear language and an orderly manner.

Do type the report if possible. Storing it on a word processor helps for making amendments.

Do use a sensible typeface (e.g. Ariel, Times) and font size (12 point).

Don't place the report in a fancy file. It should be easy to open, read and annotate.