

PSY 4215 Lab Report Format Spring 2016

We will be using a modified version of APA format. I list below the major sections and what is expected to appear in each section. The general format rules are to use Times New Roman font, 12-pt size, 1-inch margins top, bottom, left, and right. Use double-spacing throughout the document.

Title Page.

The title should be centered, located about 1/3 from the top of the page. Avoid filler words like “An investigation of....” The point of the lab (major question, hypothesis) should be clear. Include IV and DV. Your name should appear underneath the title and then Appalachian State University underneath your name.

Your Header should include only your last name and page number, right justified.

Introduction.

The section will begin with a repeat of your title, using the exact same format as used on the title page. A good introduction describes the problem or issue and your general approach to investigate the issue. The flow is from general to specific information. The major IV and DVs are identified, and the section ends with your specific predictions.

Method.

The method section may be the longest section of your report. It must be very clear. Think of it as a recipe. A reader should be able to reproduce your experiment from the description in the Method section. It consists of three parts: participants, apparatus, and procedure.

Participants. Relevant demographic data are presented here. Relevant will vary depending on what you will report on in your results. Example: If the gender of your participants is important then you should report the breakdown in this section.

Apparatus. Describe only equipment that is necessary and only to the level of detail that is necessary. It may be that the study was done using a PC but is the brand name or model number important?

Procedure. The procedure is a detailed description from start to finish of what happened. Conditions are given their operational definitions. One suggestion is that you step yourself through the instructions/procedures so you can include the relevant

information in the correct temporal sequence. The section should end with your specific predictions about what will be seen in the results.

Results. This section is where you will describe the numerical outcomes. The results may be descriptive (means and measures of variability) and inferential (tests of differences) or descriptive alone.

The numbers may appear in the main text or may appear in Tables. If you use a Table then you don't have to mention the exact values in the Results section. If you use a Table then you must explain how to tread that Table in the main text. Don't just write "See Table 1." Tables appear at the end of the paper. Tables are numbered in order of appearance. Each Table appears on a separate page. Tables have headers just like the rest of the paper.

I encourage you to use Tables because they are very efficient. Here is a youtube video to help you create a Table. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RM8Qj8KB_CI

Remember that when you use an alphabetic letter as a math symbol then it should appear in italics. (*M* = mean, *SD* = standard deviation, *SE* = standard error, *n* = number.)

Generally, one reports descriptive statistics and inferential statistics in the context of a sentence. "Table 1 shows the mean accuracy for Condition 1 and Condition 2. The results in Table 1 show that Condition 1 had a higher mean accuracy rate than Condition 2."

Figure. Any type of chart or drawing is called a Figure. Figures are located after Tables and are numbered in order of description in the text. Underneath the figure appears its number (e.g. *Figure 1.*) and instructions on how to interpret the figure (i.e., what do the axes indicate, what is the main finding in the figure).

Discussion, Begin with a verbal summary (no numbers) of the main results and connect those results to your original questions. Do the results support the original hypothesis or not? State why.

Point out issues or potential flaws in the method, But explain how that issue would concretely influence the results. Don't write "Students at ASU could be different than at other schools." Instead you need to specify the possible sequence. "The students from ASU were primarily Seniors and the students from other schools were primarily Freshmen. This difference in college experience may have produced a change in strategy such that they were more carefree in solving the Condition 1 problems."

If you do spot a flaw then make a suggestion of how to clean it up in the next study.

End with a general conclusion. Is the effect present or not?