

Tutoring Guide for Writing in the Field of Psychology

Lower Level / Undergraduate Writing

- Is the writing clear, concise, and formal?
- Is the writing done in scientific format, using APA guidelines? (NOTE: make sure the student knows to what extent the assignment needs to be in APA style.)
- Is paraphrasing used more often than direct quotes?
- Are all claims appropriately supported by evidence?
- Is the writing objective and in third person (unless otherwise indicated)?
- Is “fluff” writing avoided, especially in the introduction and conclusion?
- Is control data presented first, before experimental data?

Upper Level / Graduate Writing

- **Literature Review**
 - » Summarizes and evaluates the body of literature on a particular topic, then suggests areas for further research
 - » Evaluation addresses the relationships and inconsistencies within the literature
 - » Uses conceptual headings to organize sections of the review
- **Research Paper**
 - » Provides summary, evaluation, and suggested areas for further research
 - » Follows the general structure:
 - Beginning: Comprehensive view of topic and goals of your paper
 - Middle: Summary of specific topics
 - Conclusion: Critical evaluation of research paper
 - » Uses the appropriate verb tenses:
 - Abstract: past tense
 - Theory: present tense
 - Methods, Results: past tense
 - Discussion: past (when discussing results of another study); present (when providing your personal analysis)