

## **OVERVIEW of the RESEARCH REQUIREMENT PAPER OPTION:**

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You will summarize one research article for each research credit you need to earn. Each summary should be between 400 and 550 words.

If you had chosen to complete experiments and fell short of your goal, you will have to write PAPERS TO MAKE UP TO 5 HOURS. (EXAMPLE: 3 HOURS OF EXPERIMENTS AND 2 PAPERS=5 CREDITS)

**THE PURPOSE** of this assignment is to acquaint you with some of the basics of scientific writing. Being able to produce clear, well-organized short summaries of research articles will help you when you write review papers, research proposals, and your own research articles and laboratory reports in psychology classes.

**DUE DATE:** The general guideline is that the paper(s) must be turned in on the last day of YOUR class – not the last day of classes for the semester. Some professors may want this assignment turned in earlier. Please confirm the due date with your professor.

**SUBMISSION OF PAPERS:** You will turn in your papers to your professor(s) in the format they recommend. (email or paper) You will email a copy of your papers to: [robin.dunn@duke.edu](mailto:robin.dunn@duke.edu) so that you will be credited in Sona for your efforts.

## **WHAT YOU NEED AND WHERE TO GET IT**

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### **1. The research articles:**

*Please see the list of approved journals below from which you can choose your articles.* You must choose from this list unless your professor provides you with his or her own articles to review. Each article you chose must be an original empirical study (i.e., not a meta-analysis, narrative review, critique, etc.). You may not choose articles from journals outside of the list.

### **2. Information on Scientific Writing and How to Write Article Summaries:**

The Psychology Writing Center at Washington State University has developed resource documents for writing article summaries and related writing issues. The key documents for this assignment are:

- Summarizing a Research Article (MOST IMPORTANT FOR THIS ASSIGNMENT)
- Style Points for Scientific Writing
- Plagiarism and Student Writing

The handouts from the UW Psychology Writing Center are excellent. They are used nationally. All are available for printing. The web address for the Psychology Writing Center is:

<http://web.psych.washington.edu/writingcenter>

## **WRITING YOUR SUMMARY**

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**1. Read the article and identify key points:** the research topic, hypotheses, what was done, the results, and how the experimenter interpreted the results. Circling these points will help you find them when you write. Do your best to understand the article. Write notes in the margin and use a highlighter to

mark important sections. Talk about the article with others and see if you can explain it to somebody who has not read the paper. Spend about half your work time for this assignment here.

**2. Write the summary.** The summary should be a condensed version of the article rather than an article abstract. Abstracts are more concise and reflect the authors' decisions about information that should be mentioned. Avoid "lifting" sentences or paraphrasing from the article or the abstract. Use your own words.

Below is one possible plan. The suggested numbers of sentences are JUST GUIDELINES. You do not have to match the recommendations. There are also other possible ways to organize the summary. Do not worry about getting the number of sentences per section to match perfectly the suggested numbers below.

Possible plan with approximate number of sentences per topic

- 3-5: Background (why was the research conducted; why is the research question interesting)
- 1-2: Purpose of study (The researchers' hypotheses)
- 3-5: Methods (Who participated, how many participated, the design - what conditions were compared, measures, procedure - what was done)
- 3-5: Results (describe the key findings)
- 2-4: Discussion (What the results mean, implications)

Your summary may be one long paragraph or you may divide it into several paragraphs.

**3. Revise the summary.**

One good step is to have someone else (who has not read the article) read your rough draft. Then have your reader describe the article in his or her own words. What readers say will clue you in to anything you have left out.

## WRITING TIPS FOR THIS ASSIGNMENT

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- Be sure to cover the results and discussion: Students often provide too much detail on the method section and slight the results and discussion.
- Do not copy phrases verbatim. If you cannot use your own words, you need to read the article again to make sure you understand it. Also avoid the trap of relying on the article abstract.
- Do not quote from the article. We rarely need to quote words from a research article. Use your own words.
- Be specific. Vagueness is deadly in scientific writing, especially in summaries. Pay particular attention to the Method section; make sure you state who the participants were, the experimental design, what materials were used and how the experiment was performed (the procedure).
- Be direct. Avoid hedging - using language that suggests you are not sure of what you are saying, e.g., do not say "The purpose of the study seems to be...."
- Avoid inflated claims. When you say what the results mean (Discussion), do not overstate what the research showed ("This finding will revolutionize life as we know it")
- Avoid vapid generalization. Do not use sweeping vague statements such as "These results have implications for the court system."
- When you cite the paper, you should follow APA guidelines for citation.

## FORMAT FOR THE PAPER YOU HAND IN

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- Your paper should have a single spaced heading that includes:
  - Your full name as the registrar has it
  - Your PSY course and section
  - Date
  - Paper cited in APA format
- Your assignment must be double-spaced, one inch margins and 12 point type.
- Your summaries should be 400 to 550 each.
- **Save your paper** with your first initial and last name, your course number and the last name of the author of the paper you have reviewed. **Example: RDunn\_PSY101\_Bronson.doc**
- \*\*\* Be sure to keep a copy of your papers. \*\*\*

### NOTES

You are encouraged to talk about the research article and the assignment with others. However, the writing must be your own. Likewise, copying or paraphrasing sentences or phrases from the article is not acceptable.

## List of Approved Publications

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### General

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Journal of Experimental Psychology (JEP) -- including all the different journals

- JEP: General
- JEP: Learning, Memory, & Cognition
- JEP: Applied
- JEP: Human Perception & Performance

### Social Psychology

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British Journal of Social Psychology  
European Journal of Social Psychology  
Journal of Applied Social Psychology  
Journal of Experimental Social Psychology  
Journal of Personality and Social Psychology  
Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin  
Social Psychological and Personality Science

### Cognitive

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Applied Cognitive Psychology  
Cerebral Cortex  
Cognition  
Cognitive Psychology  
Human Brain Mapping

Journal of Cognitive Neuroscience  
Journal of Experimental Psychology (all sections: General, LMC, etc.)  
Journal of Neuroscience  
Memory & Cognition  
Nature Neuroscience  
Neuroimage  
Neuron  
Neuropsychologia  
Perception & Psychophysics  
Psychological Science

## **Developmental**

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British Journal of Developmental Psychology  
Child Development  
Cognitive Development  
Developmental Psychology  
Early Childhood Research Quarterly  
Infant and Child Development  
Infant Behavior and Development  
Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology  
Journal of Experimental Child Psychology  
Journal of Research on Adolescence  
Merrill-Palmer Quarterly  
Social Development

## **Abnormal**

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Journal of Abnormal Psychology  
Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology  
Development and Psychopathology  
Journal of Clinical Psychology

## **Personality**

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Journal of Personality and Social Psychology  
Journal of Social Behavior and Personality  
Journal of Personality  
Psychological Assessment

Your professor may have specific articles or journals selected for his or her class. Be sure to check your syllabus to confirm your professor's preferences.