

Outline for Psychology Research

- I. Abstract
Appears first in the paper, but is often written last; should contain key facts from each section of the report; includes the major purpose, result, and contribution of your study; written in active rather than passive voice;
- II. Introduction and Literature Review (not labeled in the text)
Writing in this section is often very explicit (Ex: “The purpose of the study was. . . “ or “The specific hypotheses were. . . “). APA recommends five components:
 - A. Purpose of the study
 - B. Scholarly review of literature
 - C. Theoretical implications (what could be true but has not been studied yet)
 - D. Definitions of variables
 - E. Statement of hypotheses and their rationales
- III. Method
Describes the actual experiment; has two purposes:
 - A. Provides details of the sample and procedures so that other researchers can replicate the study exactly
 - B. Describes method so that it is possible to judge reliability and validity of the experiment
- IV. Results
Contains the summary of the findings, including the results of statistical analyses; reports tests of hypotheses in the order in which they were originally presented; does not include any discussion, only results of the experiment.
- V. Discussion
Contains three types of material:
 - A. Inevitable—results are evaluated in terms of the research questions and/or hypotheses generated in the introduction; objective
 - B. Creative—researcher views the findings of the research to determine what else (in addition to inevitable results) *might* be interesting about them
 - C. Confessional—refers to the limitations of the study
- VI. References
Lists the works referred to in the paper; should not contain anything not actually used to write the paper. (See recommended APA documentation guide for format.)