

Running head: PSYCHOLOGY ESSAY INSTRUCTIONS

Essay Instructions for Psychology

(Revised Version, 2004)

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In your paper, include this:

Paper submitted to Dr. XXX for Psy YYY, Date (month, day number, year)

Abstract

This paper presents the requirements for writing a psychology essay or term paper. It describes what is included in each section: Title Page, Abstract, Text (Introduction, Argument, Conclusion), References, and Appendix. The most important guideline is that the essay must normally address a research question and defend a thesis by clearly presenting a reasoned argument, with facts, based on scientific evidence from published primary sources.

ESSAY INSTRUCTIONS FOR PSYCHOLOGY (REVISED VERSION, 2004)

Introduction to this Document

Background

Because the precise instructions for essays or term papers may vary among departments and among courses within departments, students must understand what is expected of them. In the psychology department, the goal of an essay is to discuss an issue in depth. In particular, the argument defends a thesis, which is the proposed answer to a research question, on the basis of scientific evidence.

Purpose

The purpose of this guide is to provide hints on planning your research and instructions for writing your essay, which follows the format of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA Manual, 2001). See also other guides (Alsip & Chezik, 1974; Northey & Timney, 1986; Parrott, 1994; Vipond, 1996).

Although this handout is designed for psychology students in general, psychology professors may have slightly different requirements in particular courses.

Argument of this Document

*Planning the Research**Selection of a Topic*

Although your instructor may specify a topic, you will often have to select your own, which may be difficult if you are new to psychology. Here are some suggestions on how to proceed:

(a) *Browsing among books and journals in the library* may uncover a problem for you to pursue. This is likely to be initially broad (e.g., gender differences), but by reading you can narrow it down (e.g., gender differences in mathematical ability).

(b) *Something said in lectures, course textbook or readings* may strike you as worth pursuing further. It may be a theoretical statement or an interesting research result.

(c) *From everyday life*, you may have a question arising from some experiences or personal observations; or you may have wondered about some practical application of psychology or some claim that you have heard. These are usually good starting points, because you are personally involved with the topic from the beginning.

Always do some preliminary reading before choosing a topic, paying particular attention to recent works. Various sources can be used, but it may be easiest to initially look up your topic in recent introductory or other textbooks to obtain a general overview of what authors say. These *secondary sources* may also provide you with useful *primary sources* (published and refereed journal articles that contain the original research), particularly if a number of books all mention a common paper. More detailed information may then be obtained by consulting the “journal about journals” (*Psychological Abstracts, PA*), or another source such as the *Social Science Index*.

However, **it is far more preferable to undertake a computer search** via *PsycInfo*. This allows you to search the psychological literature on any topic from today back to 1887! Like *PA*, it provides an abstract of each source along with the exact reference where it can be found, but it involves less labour, permits a search of more than subject at a time and has wider coverage (Vipond, 1996, pp. 21-22). Because the purpose

of the *PsyInfo* search is to give you sources that you read in the original, avoid only reading and citing the *PsyInfo* abstract itself.

To locate this search engine, go to the library website and use *Periodical Indexes and Databases* and scroll down to *PsycInfo*. When you open this, you can specify the time period that you wish to consider and you can enter a key word or words for your topic of interest. Also useful from the same library site is *ProQuest, Psychology and Behavioral Sciences Collection, Science Direct* and *Medline*.

The purpose of these searches is to give you primary sources that you then read in the original. To find these sources, you can search the library catalog with *Boris*, and you can go to the library website and use *Electronic Journals* to find out if the journals can be accessed directly on-line. Given that you know the name of the journal, simply see if it exists in the alphabetical index. If the journal that you want is published by the American Psychological Association, you can use the library website *Periodical Indexes and Databases* and find the paper on-line using *PsycARTICLES*.

Having conducted a search, make sure that you will have access to the sources before choosing the topic! There is nothing worse than starting to work on your paper and then discovering that you cannot find sources. If there is a source that is important and is not available electronically or in the library, you can always request it using inter-library loan. But remember this takes time.

Approval of Topic

Because the essay represents an accumulation of your reading and thinking over a period of time (*term-paper*), you must start work on it early. Please note:

(a) The essay is a *review of the literature* on a certain topic. It is based on library research and does not normally contain data collected by yourself, for two reasons: one purpose of the exercise is for you to gather information from published papers and to integrate it around a research question; gathering, analyzing and interpreting data requires expertise in research methods and statistics, skills that you may not yet possess.

(b) First, ascertain your general area of interest in psychology. Second, formulate a *specific research question* with clear alternative answers that can be evaluated with a structured argument based on scientific facts from published research. Examples of appropriate questions are "Does subliminal stimulation work?" or "Which method is best for teaching reading?" or "Is conditioning only an associative process?" Third, formulate a *thesis statement*, which is your (at this stage, preliminary) answer to the research question. For example, "Subliminal stimulation has effects on behaviour", or "Phonics is better than whole language", or "Conditioning is cognitive". Examples of inappropriate research questions are a general statement (e.g., "Does the environment affect behaviour? - Yes"), an indisputable fact (e.g., "Do people vary? - Yes") or a personal hunch or prejudice (e.g., "Is school fun? - No").

If an essay approval sheet is provided in the course (see a sample at the end of this document), complete the provisional title, the research question, probable thesis statement, brief description of argument (working outline) and provisional list of references that you will use. You *must* include *primary sources* and, depending on the course, you may be permitted some secondary sources. ***Secondary sources*** are *textbooks and other sources that contain another writer's review of a topic; they may describe research, but it is a second-hand account. Primary sources* contain descriptions of the

original research written by the person who actually conducted it. In most cases, they are scientific journal articles that describe method and results in detail; sometimes they may be chapters in edited books. In your proposal, clearly separate the secondary and primary sources.

Make a copy of the proposal for yourself and **submit the original to the instructor** by the deadline provided. Essays on unapproved topics will not be accepted.

Writing the Essay

Type the paper on a word processor using double-spacing throughout; font New York 12 is a good choice. Save frequently and keep a copy on a diskette, plus a backup copy elsewhere. Submit it by the deadline provided, noting any penalty for lateness (see your course grading scheme). Make sure that your essay is of appropriate length, according to course instructions; if it is too short or too long, the grade will be reduced.

Structure of the Essay

To persuade the reader that your thesis statement can be reasonably defended, you must present a rational argument based on specific scientific evidence (facts):

- (a) Decide upon the thesis statement, which is the answer to your research question;
- (b) Formulate the argument, which is a debate, and split it into stages;
- (c) Present the facts (evidence) *in support of and in conflict with* each stage of your argument, arriving at "mini-conclusions" along the way;
- (d) Integrate the states and facts into a balanced, cohesive argument.

Sections of the Essay

In psychology, essays follow American Psychological Association (APA Manual, 2001) format, which specifies the following sections: Title Page, Abstract, Body of Text, References and Appendix. For the purposes of this paper, use these together with the additional sections within the Body of Text; the latter subsections will help you to clearly present your research question and thesis statement.

Title page. This page, numbered 1, contains the title, author's name and institutional affiliation. Follow the format of the title page of this document. Make sure that the title clearly reflects your research question or thesis. In this document, the title is "Essay (Term Paper) Instructions for Psychology (Revised Version, 2002)". Your title will tell the reader what your topic is about.

For the purposes of this paper, also include the instructor's name, course number and date at the bottom of the page, as follows:

"Paper submitted to Dr. XXX for Psy YYY, Date (month, day number, year)"

Abstract. This new page, numbered 2, is headed "Abstract" (we only use inverted commas here because this is a title that we are citing) and contains a summary of the paper in about 150 words. It states the research question and summarizes the basic argument and conclusion, which contain the thesis statement. Although the Abstract appears at the beginning of the essay, it is written last, after the essay has been completed.

The body of the text of the essay contains three logical parts: Introduction, Argument and Conclusion.

Introduction. Begin this on a new page (numbered 3), with the essay title repeated as the main heading. Then, as in the present document (see p. 3), start with the heading

"Introduction". Strictly speaking, in APA format, this heading is not used, but employ it for the purposes of the essay.

Although APA format does not require the following specific headings and wording, please use them to ensure that you present a clear introduction to your research question. You should also check with your instructor on this format, since he/she may deem it to be unnecessary.

Follow the introduction heading immediately with another section, titled "*Background*". Here, give an introduction to the topic of the essay, giving a brief summary of the area of psychology and provide some general information leading into the specific research question. You might wish to state why you chose the topic and to seize the reader's attention with a colourful comment or quotation. Clearly state your research question as follows: *The research question of this essay is "Does subliminal advertising work?"*.

Then, present a second section within the introduction, titled "*Purpose*". Here, give your thesis statement as follows: *The thesis statement of this essay is "Subliminal stimuli may have some subtle effects but they do not promote successful advertising"*. Finish by informing the reader of the broad outline of the argument to come.

Argument. (no new page, but use this heading) Here, you develop the case that you wish to make, by presenting the basic scientific facts and other evidence integrated into a well-structured logical argument as in (b), (c) and (d) above. Subheadings are seldom necessary unless the material is especially complex and lengthy. If you have them, do not use them as a substitute for linking your argument with transitional statements.

Most of your claims, and certainly the important ones, will be backed up with scientific evidence, usually from primary sources. This involves describing the method of the study (participants, procedure) then giving the results by describing the numerical data for the important conditions. Present the results clearly and link them systematically to your argument. You might also present a critical analysis of the method, statistical treatment of data or the author's interpretation of the results. Take particular care to state whether the study is experimental or descriptive (e.g., observational or correlational), and interpret the results accordingly (i.e., do they demonstrate cause and effect?). In your critical analysis, you might also mention experiences or other information that agrees or conflicts with the results and conclusion of the study. You might also wish to comment positively if you think that the study was well done.

For more information on the use of evidence in your argument, see below (*Use of Evidence*).

Conclusion. (no new page, but use this heading) The ideas here follow logically from the argument and must relate to the introduction. Summarize the major parts of the argument and draw a conclusion that refers to your thesis. A reader should be able to predict your conclusion from your introduction and argument. Do not introduce new material, unless perhaps speculations or suggestions for future research.

References. Take a new page, and use this heading. List all sources mentioned in the essay, in alphabetical order by author. Note the important distinction in psychology between **References** and **Bibliography**. References contains sources read and cited in the essay, whereas Bibliography would contain sources consulted but not referred to. However, the Bibliography section is rarely, if ever, used in psychology, so do not use it

(APA Manual, 2001). This also implies that the Reference section should not list books or articles that were not cited in the essay.

APA style also requires that books and journal articles be presented in a particular format (see below and at the end of this guide for examples).

List journal articles as follows:

Author's surname, initials (date). Title of article. *Title of journal*, *Volume number*, page numbers.

Here is an example of a journal reference:

Sperry, R. W. (1951). Neurology and the mind-body problem. *American Scientist*, *40*, 291-312.

List books as follows:

Author's surname, initials (date). *Title of book*. Place of publication: Publisher.

Here is an example of a book reference:

Carver, C. S., & Scheier, M. F. (1981). *Attention and self-regulation*. New York: Springer-Verlag.

Here is an example of citing a chapter from an edited text:

Bjork, R. A. (1989). Retrieval inhibition as an adaptive mechanism in human memory. In H. L. Roediger III & F. I. M. Craik (Eds.), *Varieties of memory & consciousness* (pp 309-330). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Here is an example of an Internet-only journal:

Frederickson, B. L. (2000, March 7). Cultivating positive emotions to optimize health and well-being. *Prevention & Treatment*, *3*, Article 0001a. Retrieved November 20, 2000, from <http://journals.apa.org/prevention/volume3/pre0030001a.html>.

Note: For more detailed information on citing internet sources, consult the APA website:

<http://www.apastyle.org/electref.html>. A website that has no listed author, while seldom of academic interest, may be cited by title.

Note: Use internet sites very sparingly for the information to be used in your paper. They are not equivalent to refereed journals or books.

Appendix. The Appendix contains any extra material such as photographs, photocopies, drawings, or detailed figures/tables of numerical information from research studies. According to APA format (APA Manual, 2001), it should follow the References, so place it last.

Format of paper. Here is a summary of the format of your paper

Page 1: Title Page

Page 2: Abstract

Page 3 to: Body of Text (Introduction, Argument, Conclusion)

Format for Body of Text:

Title of Paper in Centre of Page

Introduction (flush left; use this heading)

Start writing here.....

Background. (indented) Start writing here.....

Purpose. (indented) Start writing here.....

Argument (flush left; use this heading)

Start writing here.....

Conclusion (flush left; use this heading)

Start writing here.....

Next Page: References (heading in centre of page)

See above for reference format.

Next page: Appendix (heading in centre of page)

Levels of headings. There are five kinds of heading in APA format (see use of all of them in this paper):

<p>CENTERED HEADING (UPPERCASE LETTERS)</p> <p>Centered Heading (Lowercase letters)</p> <p><i>Centered, italicized main heading</i></p> <p><i>A Flush Side Italicized Heading</i></p> <p><i>An indented paragraph italicized heading.</i></p>

If you require only three levels, use the second, third and fifth.

Use of Evidence

Kinds of Evidence

The core of your essay is the *evidence* on which the argument is based. Part of the essay grade is based on facts alone, and part on the quality of the argument developed from them. Evidence can be of three main kinds, in the following order of importance:

(a) *Scientific evidence.* These are facts found from objective procedures (experimental or nonexperimental research, which itself could be survey, interview, observational or correlational research). Do not confuse case studies of single events or people with experimental evidence.

(b) *Illustrative examples.* These are used to clarify claims. They often involve description of cases.

(c) *Unsubstantiated claims/anecdotes.* These are alleged facts that are interesting, but do not have a scientific basis. Personal experiences could be included here.

Presentation of Evidence

In your argument, be factual, and cite *scientific studies* in support of most (about 90%) of your claims. When you are citing a study in the text, give the author's name (date

of publication) but *not the title of the work*. Describe the participants and the procedure of the study, including experimental conditions, then summarize the results and the author's conclusion. As a rule, give some descriptive numerical data, e.g., percentage of patients reported cured or mean scores for improvement under therapy and treatment conditions. (*Note*. Do not include a significance levels, such as $p < .05$. Rather, report only whether a finding is statistically significant or not.)

For an important study, you might include a Figure or Table and put it in your Appendix. Integrate this information smoothly into your argument by stating clearly the claim that the results support or refute and by linking the claim to previous and subsequent ones. Although most of your claims should be based on experimental or nonexperimental scientific research, you may also include illustrative examples and anecdotes, including personal experiences, as long as you inform the reader. Be careful not to draw cause and effect conclusions from nonexperimental research. In particular, do not confuse case studies with scientific evidence. Case studies may provide in-depth information about a case or an event, but they are certainly not experiments!

As noted earlier, your facts should be taken from original journal articles or specialized monographs (primary sources) rather than from sources that describe someone else's work (secondary sources) such as general textbooks. This ensures that you expose yourself some original works and avoids the problem that authors of review articles or general textbooks sometimes misrepresent studies carried out by others. If you rely too much on secondary sources, you may never realize this, and you run the risk of also misrepresenting the original studies. This could mean that your conclusions, although honestly made, are erroneous. Consult your course instructor for the guidelines

about the use of primary and secondary sources. As you take courses beyond first year, it is likely that you will be required to use more primary sources and perhaps only primary sources.

Citing Your Sources (References)

It is *essential* that you cite *proper references* in the paper when presenting evidence for your argument. Details for proper citation are set out in the handout on academic honesty and the brief section below on plagiarism, but here are some examples of how to cite.

If you *actually read original works* by Smith and by Jones, you might say in your paper:

"In a study involving 500 participants (250 of each gender), Smith (1993) found that girls had higher verbal IQ scores than boys. However, Jones (1994) tested different age groups and reported that this only occurred with children and adolescents, not with adults." (Note: fictitious claim)

Then, list the full references at the end of the paper in the Reference section. Note that in psychology you must give names and dates in the body of the essay. ***Do not use footnotes at the bottom of the page or at the end.***

If you obtained the above information from a *secondary source* (e.g., a book or review article by Brown (1997)), it should be presented differently, for example:

"In a study involving 500 participants (250 of each gender), Smith (1993; cited in Brown, 1997, p. 24) found that girls had higher verbal IQ scores than boys.

However, Jones (1994; cited in Brown, 1997, p. 24) tested different age groups

and reported that this only occurred with children and adolescents, not with adults."

Alternatively, you may say:

"Brown (1997, p. 24) reviews work by Smith (1993) and Jones (1994). Brown reports that Smith found that..... However, Brown also described Jones' findings that....."

In both of these cases, you *only list Brown (1997)* in the References at the end of the paper, because *that is all that you read*. Do not list the papers by Smith and by Jones unless you read them yourself. Sources listed in References have all been consulted directly.

Critical Comment

Although most of the facts and some of the ideas and views in your paper will be based on those of others (who should be acknowledged, cited and properly listed), try to add some critical comment of your own. For example, as noted above, you may not be happy with the way a study was conducted or you may disagree with the interpretation made by the investigator. Particular attention should be paid to whether or not the study is experimental or nonexperimental, because that will allow you to judge whether it demonstrates *cause and effect*.

However, clearly understand that the integration of the facts into a reasoned argument must be *all your own work*. *You* should assemble the overall argument.

Writing Style

Although the most important feature of the essay is the quality of its content (facts and argument), this cannot be properly judged unless the essay is well-written. Write

clearly and understandably, to keep the reader's attention and interest. Remember that he or she will be reading many papers! There is usually a specific mark for writing style itself, but a low mark there will inevitably be also reflected in the mark for content.

To ensure that your style is good, use proper grammar, spelling, punctuation and paragraphing. Also, be concise and avoid slang, clichés and jargon. Of course, technical terms may be necessary, so describe them clearly. When you have written something, *read it over aloud* to yourself, and ask if it is correct, understandable and is easy to read. Put yourself in the position of the reader. If you are not sure of your judgment, ask someone who is a good writer to check it. You may also wish to consult standard sources on writing style (e.g., Moore, 1966; Strunk & White, 1972).

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the passing off as one's own the ideas or writings of others without proper acknowledgement. It will be treated severely. Consult the university calendar and the separate course handout on academic honesty for details. Here is a summary.

Students sometimes claim to be uncertain as to what is meant precisely by plagiarism. To ensure that you know, *read the instructions set out in the special handout devoted to this topic*. To introduce you to it, here is a summary of main points:

(a) *Quotation*. Any part of your essay that contains the exact words of an author must appear in quotation marks, with the author's name (date of publication, pages), and the source must be listed in the References section. However, quotations should normally be brief (no more than two or three words or phrases) and should occur rarely in your essay (three or four times at most). Reserve them for important points, provoking ideas or striking statements. For example, you might open your paper with an eye-catching

quotation that sets the scene for your paper. If you can express the basic idea in your own words, do so.

(b) *Adaptation of material.* Do not adapt material with only minor changes, such as combining sentences, inverting sentence order, omitting phrases or changing a few words. If what you want to say is very closely related to the author has said and it has been expressed extremely well, it is safer to quote directly. Quotation may not win you points for style, but it will prevent the charge of plagiarism! However, use quotations only occasionally.

(c) *Organization.* As noted above, the organization of the material in your paper must be completely your own work. That is, you must integrate the facts into a reasoned argument by yourself and use your own words to do so. Do not simply follow the structure of a chapter in a textbook or of a section of a review article. If a part of someone's argument is important for your paper, present it, but make sure that you acknowledge the source. For example, you may write "James (1955) reviews the literature and argues that....." or "According to James (1955), it may be argued that....."

(d) *"Self-plagiarism".* Never submit an essay that is the same or similar to one handed in to another professor. If you wish to develop a previous paper, discuss the matter with your instructor.

(e) *Retention of notes and other sources.* To ensure that you can prove that you constructed and wrote the essay, KEEP ALL YOUR ROUGH WORK, i.e., notes that you take from your sources when researching the essay, and rough drafts. Keep photocopies or printed internet information and, if you use consult a source that is not available at

Bishop's, keep a copy of the title page. You may be asked to provide your rough work and copies.

(f) These guidelines apply to any draft that is handed in for feedback or grading, not only to the final copy.

Conclusion of this Document

The term paper should be carefully researched and written according to the present specifications. It should address a research question, and ultimately defend a thesis statement by presenting a reasoned argument based on scientific evidence.

References

- Alsip, J. E., & Chezik, D. D. (1974). *Research guide in psychology*. Morristown, NJ: General Learning Press.
- American Psychological Association (2001). *Publication manual (5th ed.)*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Moore, R. H. (1966). *Handbook of effective writing*. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.
- Northey, M., & Timney, B. (1986). *Making sense in psychology and life sciences: A student's guide to writing and style*. Toronto: Oxford University Press.
- Parrott, L., III (1994). *How to write psychology term papers*. New York: HarperCollins.
- Strunk, W., & White, E. B. (1972). *The elements of style*. New York: Macmillan.
- Vipond, D. (1996). *Success in psychology: Writing and research for Canadian students*. Toronto: Harcourt Brace.

Keep a copy of this sheet for yourself. I retain this one as my record of your topic.

Essay Topic Approval Sheet

Instructor: Stuart J. McKelvie

Date: _____

Course Number: _____

Course Name: _____

Student Name: _____

Student Number: _____

Provisional Title (topic of paper): _____

1. Research Question: _____

2. Thesis Statement: _____

3. Brief Description of Stages of Argument (Working Outline)

4. Provisional List of References (continue on back if necessary)

Secondary Sources

Primary Sources

5. Interview with instructor about this topic approval sheet

MARKING SCHEME FOR INTRODUCTORY PSYCHOLOGY ESSAY (TERM PAPER)

Student Name: _____ Course: Psy _____

Instructor: Stuart J. McKelvie Date: _____

FORMAT -5

CONTENT -75

- 1. Evidence (scientific and other facts) -30
- 2. Documentation (referencing) - 5
- 3. Quality of Argument -30
 - Reasoning* (including clear thesis) -20
 - Organization* (composition) -10
- 4. Originality and Creativity -10

WRITING SKILLS -20

- 1. Basic rules -10
- 2. Language Usage -10

Total -100

COMMENTS

Strongest points of essay _____

Weakest points of essay _____

Further comments _____

Final Grade:

FORMAT

Cover page
 Abstract
 Introduction
 Background
 Purpose
 Argument
 Conclusion
 References
 (Appendix)

WRITING SKILLS

1. Basic Rules

Grammar
 Spelling
 Punctuation
 Paragraphing

2. Language Usage

Correct vocabulary
 Precision
 Conciseness
 Avoidance of jargon
 Avoidance of slang
 Avoidance of clichés
 Style (lack of awkward construction)
 Interest (richness) of expression
 Appropriate quotation

CONTENT

1. Evidence (facts)

Adequacy of primary sources
 Adequacy of scientific evidence
 Breadth of coverage
 Amount of information
 Number of studies
 Amount of detail given
 Accuracy of scientific evidence
 Relevance of scientific evidence

Adequacy of other evidence (illustrative examples and other facts)
 Accuracy of other evidence
 Relevance of other evidence
 Clarity of exposition of factual claims

2. Documentation (referencing)

Acknowledgment of sources
 APA format for acknowledgment
 APA format for listing
 No plagiarism

CONTENT (continued)

3. Quality of Argument

Reasoning

Clear research question
 Clear thesis

Scope of issues raised
 Relevance of issues

Correct interpretation of evidence

Clarity of others' ideas:
 theories, concepts, terms
 Understanding of ideas

Clarity of your argument
 Logic of your argument
 Internal consistency of your argument
 Balance of your argument
 Both sides presented
 Contrasts, comparisons
 Critical analysis (see originality too)

Organization (composition)

Sections (introduction, argument, conclusion)
 Meaningful sequence of ideas
 Linking of ideas into a cohesive, flowing argument

4. Originality and Creativity

Nature of topic chosen
 Reinterpretation of evidence
 Criticism of methods
 Criticism of others' ideas
 Own theory
 Original suggestions
 Personal opinions
 Criticism of own ideas

// Points requiring most attention

MARKING SCHEME FOR PSYCHOLOGY ESSAY (TERM PAPER)

Student Name: _____ Course: Psy _____

Instructor: Stuart J. McKelvie Date: _____

FORMAT -5

CONTENT -75

- 1. Evidence (scientific and other facts) -25
- 2. Documentation (referencing) - 5
- 3. Quality of Argument -30
 - Reasoning* (including clear thesis) -20
 - Organization* (composition) -10
- 4. Originality and Creativity -15

WRITING SKILLS -20

- 1. Basic rules -10
- 2. Language Usage -10

Total -100

COMMENTS

Strongest points of essay _____

Weakest points of essay _____

Further comments _____

Final Grade:

FORMAT

Cover page
 Abstract
 Introduction
 Background
 Purpose
 Argument
 Conclusion
 References
 (Appendix)

WRITING SKILLS

1. Basic Rules

Grammar
 Spelling
 Punctuation
 Paragraphing

2. Language Usage

Correct vocabulary
 Precision
 Conciseness
 Avoidance of jargon
 Avoidance of slang
 Avoidance of clichés
 Style (lack of awkward construction)
 Interest (richness) of expression
 Appropriate quotation

CONTENT

1. Evidence (facts)

Adequacy of primary sources
 Adequacy of scientific evidence
 Breadth of coverage
 Amount of information
 Number of studies
 Amount of detail given
 Accuracy of scientific evidence
 Relevance of scientific evidence

Adequacy of other evidence (illustrative examples and other facts)
 Accuracy of other evidence
 Relevance of other evidence
 Clarity of exposition of factual claims

2. Documentation (referencing)

Acknowledgment of sources
 APA format for acknowledgment
 APA format for listing
 No plagiarism

CONTENT (continued)

3. Quality of Argument

Reasoning

Clear research question
 Clear thesis

Scope of issues raised
 Relevance of issues

Correct interpretation of evidence

Clarity of others' ideas:
 theories, concepts, terms
 Understanding of ideas

Clarity of your argument
 Logic of your argument
 Internal consistency of your argument
 Balance of your argument
 Both sides presented
 Contrasts, comparisons
 Critical analysis (see originality too)

Organization (composition)

Sections (introduction, argument, conclusion)
 Meaningful sequence of ideas
 Linking of ideas into a cohesive, flowing argument

4. Originality and Creativity

Nature of topic chosen
 Reinterpretation of evidence
 Criticism of methods
 Criticism of others' ideas
 Own theory
 Original suggestions
 Personal opinions
 Criticism of own ideas

// Points requiring most attention

