WRITING IN THE DISCIPLINES: PSYCHOLOGY

THE BASICS

Psychologists investigate cognition, personality, human development, social interactions, and more through thoughtful question asking and research.

WRITING STYLE

- Paraphrase rather than quoting directly
- American Psychological Association (APA) citations
- "(Author Date)" used in in-text citations
- Utilize others' research to demonstrate credibility

- Empirical data is presented quantitatively
- Qualitative data comes from direct observations and subject statements
- Use data to offer recommendations
- Present information as clearly and objectively as possible

TYPES OF PSYCHOLOGY WRITING

- **Literature review:** Reports on and evaluates published research on a particular topic
  - Does not merely summarize research findings but argues a position with evidence
  - Can stand alone as a paper or be included in research paper/empirical study
  - In a research paper, a literature review includes previously published findings relevant to the research question
- **Research paper:** Specific purpose will vary by class
  - Purpose may be to demonstrate your understanding of others' research findings
  - May also be a report on an experiment you've conducted (empirical study)
- **Theoretical paper**
- **Poster presentation:**
  - Visual presentation of research findings or other work

RESEARCH PAPER STANDARD ELEMENTS

- **Title Page:** Either student or professional format
- **Abstract:** Summary of paper (~250 words)
- **Introduction:** States research question, references previous literature, hypothesis, and predictions

- **Method:** Explains procedures of experiment
- **Results:** States results and statistical tests
- **Discussion:** Analysis/interpretation of results
- **References:** Citations in APA format

TAKEAWAY TIPS

- Be concise and straightforward
- Use discipline-specific specialized vocabulary
- Past tense for report conclusions and to discuss another's work

- Present tense to discuss results
- Avoid subjective phrases
  - Example: "I think"
- Focus on experiment's data/results and analysis

GEORGIA COLLEGE
WRITING CENTER