

## June, 2010 Writing Rubric for Psychology

Learning Objectives	Scoring Scale 4 highest	Scoring Scale 3 middle high	Scoring Scale 2 middle low	Scoring Scale 1 lowest
<b>Title and Introduction</b>	Awakens and focuses interest on the writer's agenda. Compelling.	Clear and focused. Establishes its subject. May be compelling, but may miss opportunities.	Problems with clarity or focus.	Does not attempt to generate interest. Serious problems with clarity or focus
<b>Audience Awareness</b>	The writer is fully aware of an audience and accommodates readers' needs throughout.	The writer is aware of an audience and sometimes accommodates readers' needs.	The writer is aware of, but not clear about, audience. The essay is occasionally confusing.	The writer is not aware of audience needs. The essay is frequently confusing.
<b>Thesis or Research Question</b>	The writer formulates an elegant, ambitious argument or question which governs the evidence and analysis throughout.	The thesis / question is clear and arguable, even interesting, and governs the evidence throughout.	The thesis/question is not entirely clear or is not arguable or does not govern the evidence throughout	The thesis/question is difficult or impossible to identify, and the purpose of the essay is unclear.
<b>Use of Key Terms</b>	The writer establishes, and defines where necessary, the key terms of the argument. Key terms are used with confidence and sophistication.	Key terms are established and defined. Use of key terms lacks either confidence or sophistication.	Key terms are established but not consistently used or not clearly defined.	Key terms are not established, or they are unclear or inappropriate.
<b>Information and Evidence</b>	The writer selects persuasive, interesting, and insightful information to contextualize and inform the argument. Sources are cited appropriately. When necessary, evidence counter to the argument is effectively addressed.	Sufficient and appropriate persuasive information informs and contextualizes the argument. Sources are appropriately cited. Ineffective counter argument.	Information informing and contextualizing the argument is sometimes insufficient or unpersuasive for the argument. Sources are sometimes inappropriately cited. No counter argument.	Information informing and contextualizing the argument is rarely sufficient or persuasive for the argument. Sources are generally inappropriately cited or not cited.
<b>Structure</b>	Elegantly organized with respect to both the whole essay and the continuity of paragraphs. Accommodates the complexity of the argument imaginatively.	Well organized throughout but without either elegance or complexity. It accommodates the argument satisfactorily.	Well organized on the whole but occasionally needing work on individual paragraphs or continuity. It accommodates the argument.	Organization is haphazard and the argument is difficult to follow. Paragraphs and continuity need work.

<b>Analysis and Interpretation</b>	The writer always analyzes the evidence in support of the argument. Interpretation is insightful and persuasive, and displays extraordinary depth of thought. May pose original ideas.	The writer usually analyzes the evidence in support of the argument. Interpretation is persuasive and occasionally insightful.	The writer sometimes analyzes the evidence in support of the argument. Interpretation is sometimes persuasive but rarely insightful.	The writer rarely analyzes the evidence in support of the argument. Interpretation may be implausible.
<b>Mechanics</b>	The writer demonstrates a wide range of vocabulary and sentence structures. Few or no errors.	The writer demonstrates some range of vocabulary and sentence structures. Some errors.	The writer demonstrates a limited range of vocabulary and sentence structures. Frequent errors when attempting complexity.	Persistent errors with simple vocabulary and sentence structures.
<b>Voice and Style</b>	The writer sustains an appropriate and interesting voice. The essay is complex and handled with sophistication throughout.	The writer sustains an appropriate voice and is occasionally interesting. The essay is handled with clarity and purpose, and occasional sophistication.	The writer's voice is occasionally inappropriate or lacking confidence. The essay is handled without sophistication.	The writer is unable to sustain an appropriate voice. The essay may be potentially interesting but is handled without clarity or purpose.
<b>Conclusion</b>	The conclusion answers all questions with insight. It continues to stimulate the reader's thinking and may suggest questions for further research.	The conclusion answers all questions satisfactorily and may suggest questions for further research.	The conclusion answers most questions, but may be unclear or incomplete.	The essay ends without concluding.

<i>Specifically for Psychology</i>	<b>Scoring Scale 4 highest</b>	<b>Scoring Scale 3 middle high</b>	<b>Scoring Scale 2 middle low</b>	<b>Scoring Scale 1 lowest</b>
<b>Abstract (if needed)</b>	The abstract clearly states the question being addressed, the methods used, the findings, and the main implication of the paper.	The author has tried to do this but fails in one or more ways (wordy, overly vague, etc.).	The abstract is unclear such that the reader does not know after reading it what the paper is about or the findings.	The reader would be better off without this abstract. The wording is so unclear as to mislead the reader about the author's goals.
<b>Literature Review: understanding of the research</b>	The writer has analyzed and interpreted the scholarly research accurately throughout the paper.  Prior research findings are synthesized for the reader (as opposed to being presented as a string of research summaries). The specific variables considered are appropriate for the questions being asked.	In general, the writer has analyzed and interpreted the scholarly research accurately. There are, however, a few places in which the author's interpretation or understanding of the literature is flawed.  Generally as left, but occasionally vague or misses an important variable or finding. Some organization assists the reader & transitions between sections are clear.	The writer has demonstrated a rudimentary or unsophisticated understanding of the research. In addition, the author is clearly mistaken in places.  Weak synthesis of findings. There is however, some organization to assist the reader and transitions are used between sections.	The author's interpretation of the research is neither insightful nor convincing and frequently wrong.  The author has reviewed the literature superficially. It is presented as a string of abstracts without meaningful transitions or interpretation.
<b>Correct use of APA style</b>	The writer clearly understands and consistently uses APA style, appropriately throughout the text (especially citations).	The writer has generally provided accurate citations and support with a few errors	Sources are not always identified or are inaccurately cited. The writer demonstrates a minimal awareness of how one should use APA style to credit sources.	The writer fails to document sources and provides little awareness of APA style for doing so.
<i>If the student is proposing or has conducted an empirical study:</i>  <b>Study hypotheses</b>	The specific hypotheses are compelling and insightful. Follows from the scientific literature reviewed.	The hypotheses are related to the literature reviewed, but the connection could be clearer.	The hypotheses are weakly related to the literature. But with effort the reader can understand how the author arrived at this point.	The hypotheses are unrelated to the literature reviewed. The author chose the wrong body or misunderstood the literature.

	<b>Scoring Scale 4 highest</b>	<b>Scoring Scale 3 middle high</b>	<b>Scoring Scale 2 middle low</b>	<b>Scoring Scale 1 lowest</b>
<b><i>Study methodology</i></b>	The methods used to collect data are fully and accurately described to the level that someone else could successfully replicate the study. Information unimportant to replicating the study is not included.	The methods used to collect data are well described, but omissions in reporting the methods are likely to result in problems for others trying to replicate the study. Information unimportant to the study is included only to a minor degree.	The methods used to collect data are poorly described, and errors and omissions in reporting the methods are likely to result in problems for others trying to replicate the study. Information unimportant to replicating the study is frequently included.	The methods used to collect data are not described. No one else could replicate the study. Information unimportant to replicating the study is frequently included.
<b><i>Study data analysis and interpretation</i></b>	The data are fully analyzed using appropriate statistical tests. The analyses are consistently described appropriately.	The data are mostly analyzed using appropriate statistical tests. The analyses are generally described appropriately.	The data are only minimally analyzed, but analyses use appropriate statistical tests. The analyses are incompletely described.	Data are, at best, only poorly analyzed. Appropriate statistical tests are not used or are improperly described.
<b><i>Study Tables &amp; Figures</i></b>	Tables and figures are used correctly to support reporting of methods and results, and they are always referred to in the text in a consistent and proper fashion. Proper format for tables and figures are used throughout.	Tables and figures are mostly used correctly to support reporting of methods and results, and they are mostly referred to in the text in a consistent and proper fashion. Proper format for tables and figures are mostly used throughout.	Tables and figures are generally used incorrectly to support reporting of methods and results, and they are only weakly referred to in the text. Improper format for tables and figures is regularly used.	Tables and figures are not used when appropriate or are consistently used improperly.

Student # \_\_\_\_\_ Paper Date/ Assignment \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date Reviewed \_\_\_\_\_ Reviewed by \_\_\_\_\_