

Article Critique Instructions (50 points possible)

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Purpose of The Article Critique Paper

1). Psychological Purpose

This paper serves several purposes, the first of which is helping you gain insight into research papers in psychology. As this may be your first time reading and writing papers in psychology, one goal of Paper I is to give you insight into what goes into such papers. This article critique paper will help you learn about the various sections of an empirical research report by reading at least one peer-reviewed articles (articles that have a Title Page, Abstract*, Literature Review, Methods Section, Results Section, and References Page—I have already selected some articles for you to critique, so make sure you only critique one in the folder provided on Blackboard). This paper will also give you some insights into how the results sections are written in APA formatted research articles. Pay close attention to those sections, as throughout this course you'll be writing up some results of your own!

In this relatively short paper, you will read one of five articles posted on blackboard and summarize what the authors did and what they found. The first part of the paper should focus on summarizing the design the authors used for their project. That is, you will identify the independent and dependent variables, talk about how the authors carried out their study, and then summarize the results (you don't need to fully understand the statistics in the results, but try to get a sense of what the authors did in their analyses). In the second part of the paper, you will critique the article for its methodological strengths and weaknesses. Finally, in part three, you will provide your references for the Article Critique Paper in APA format.

2). APA Formatting Purpose

The second purpose of the Article Critique paper is to teach you proper American Psychological Association (APA) formatting. In the instructions below, I tell you how to format your paper using APA style. There are a lot of very specific requirements in APA papers, so pay attention to the instructions below as well as Chapter 14 in your textbook! I highly recommend using the Paper I Checklist before submitting your paper, as it will help walk you through the picky nuances of APA formatting.

3). Writing Purpose

Finally, this paper is intended to help you grow as a writer. Few psychology classes give you the chance to write papers and receive feedback on your work. This class will! We will give you feedback on this paper in terms of content, spelling, and grammar.

*Most peer-reviewed articles do include an abstract, but the articles you will see on Blackboard lack an Abstract. There is a good reason for this, which you'll find out about in a later paper!

Article Critique Paper (50 points possible)

Each student is required to write an article critique paper based on one of the research articles present on Blackboard (only those articles listed on Blackboard can be critiqued – if you critique a different article, it will not be graded). The article critique paper will account for 50 points. In addition to deepening your understanding of conceptual issues discussed in lectures, this article critique assignment is designed to improve critical thinking and writing skills. Please follow the instructions and guidelines below. If you are unclear about any of this information, please ask.

What is an article critique paper?

An article critique is a written communication that conveys your understanding of a research article and how it relates to the conceptual issues of interest to this course. There are five elements emphasized in this critique: The title page (in APA formatting), summary of the article, critique of the article, brief (one paragraph) summary of the article, and appropriate referencing for the article. I suggest also looking at the example papers, which will give you a nice visual image of APA style that you can mimic in your own paper.

This article critique paper will include 5 things:**1. Title page: 1 page (4 points)**

- Use APA style to present the appropriate information:
 - A Running head must be included and formatted APA style
 - The phrase “Running head” is at the top of the title page followed by a short title of your creation (no more than 50 characters) that is in ALL CAPS. This running head is left-justified (flush left on the page). Note that the “h” in head is all lower case! Look at the first page of these instructions, and you will see how to set up your Running head.
 - There must be a page number on the title page that is right justified. It is included in the header
 - Your paper title appears on the title page. This is usually 12 words or less, and the first letter of each word is capitalized. It should be descriptive of the paper (For this paper, you should use the title of the article you are critiquing. The paper title can be the same title as in the Running head or it can differ – your choice)
 - Your name will appear on the title page
 - Your institution will appear on the title page as well
 - For all papers, make sure to double-space EVERYTHING and use Times New Roman font. This includes everything from the title page through the references.
 - This is standard APA format. ALL of your future papers will include a similar title page

2. Summary of the Article: 1 ½ page minimum, 3 pages maximum - 14 points)

An article critique should briefly summarize, in your own words, the article research question and how it was addressed in the article. Below are some things to include in your summary.

- The CAPS portion of your running head should also appear on the first page of your paper, but it will NOT include the phrase “Running head” this time, only the same title as the running head from the first paper in ALL CAPS. Again, see the

example paper. There is a powerpoint presentation on using Microsoft Word that can help you figure out how to have a different header on the title page (where “Running head” is present) and other pages in the paper (where “Running head” is NOT present). You can also find how-to information like this using youtube!

1. If you look at the header in pages 2 through 5 (including THIS current page 4 that you are reading right now!), you will see “Running head” omitted. It simply has the short title (ARTICLE CRITIQUE PAPER INSTRUCTIONS) all in caps, followed by the page number.
- The same title used on the title page should be at the top of the page on the first actual line of the paper, centered.
 - For this paper, add the word “Summary” below the title, and have it flush left. Then write your summary of the article below that
 - The summary itself will include the following: (Note – if the article involved more than one experiment, you can either choose to focus on one of the studies specifically or summarize the general design for all of the studies)
 1. Type of study (Was it experimental or correlational? How do you know?)
 2. Variables (What were the independent and dependent variables? Be specific with these. Define the terms independent and dependent variable and make sure to identify how they are operationally defined in the article)
 3. Method (Was there a random sample of participants? Was there random assignment to groups? What did the participants do in the study?). How was data collected (online, in person, archival data, etc.)
 4. Summary of findings (What were their findings?)

3. Critique of the study: 1 ½ pages minimum - 3 pages maximum - 16 points)

- This portion of the article critique assignment focuses on your own thoughts about the content of the article (i.e. your own ideas in your own words). For this section, please use the word “Critique” below the last sentence in your summary, and have the word “Critique” flush left.
- This section is a bit harder, but there are a number of ways to demonstrate critical thinking in your writing. Address **at least** four of the following elements. You can address more than four, but four is the minimum.
 - 1). In your opinion, how valid and reliable is the study? Why? (make sure to define what reliable and valid mean, and apply these definitions to the study you are critiquing. Merely mentioning that it is valid and reliable is not enough – you have to apply those terms to the article)
 - 2). Did the study authors correctly interpret their findings, or are there any alternative interpretations you can think of?
 - 3). Did the authors of the study employ appropriate ethical safeguards?
 - 4). Briefly describe a follow-up study you might design that builds on the findings of the study you read how the research presented in the article relates to research, articles or material covered in other sections of the course
 - 5). Describe whether you feel the results presented in the article are weaker or stronger than the authors claim (and why); or discuss alternative interpretations of the results (i.e. something not mentioned by the authors) and/or what research might provide a test between the proposed and alternate interpretations
 - 6). Mention additional implications of the findings not mentioned in the article (either theoretical or practical/applied)

- 7). Identify specific problems in the theory, discussion or empirical research presented in the article and how these problems could be corrected. If the problems you discuss are methodological in nature, then they must be issues that are substantial enough to affect the interpretations of the findings or arguments presented in the article. Furthermore, for methodological problems, you must justify not only why something is problematic but also how it could be resolved and why your proposed solution would be preferable.
- 8). Describe how/why the method used in the article is either better or worse for addressing a particular issue than other methods

4. Brief summary of the article: One or paragraphs (8 points)

- Write the words “Brief Summary”, and then begin the brief summary below this
- In ONE or TWO paragraphs maximum, summarize the article again, but this time I want it to be very short. In other words, take all of the information that you talked about in the summary portion of this assignment and write it again, but this time in only a few sentences.
- The reason for this section is that I want to make sure you can understand the whole study but that you can also write about it in a shorter paragraph that still emphasizes the main points of the article. Pretend that you are writing your own literature review for a research study, and you need to get the gist of an article that you read that helps support your own research across to your reader. Make sure to cite the original study (the article you are critiquing).

5. References – 1 page (4 points)

- Provide the reference for this article in proper APA format (see the book Chapter 14 for appropriate referencing guidelines or the Chapter 14 powerpoint).
- If you cited other sources during either your critique or summary, reference them as well (though you do not need to cite other sources in this assignment – this is merely optional IF you happen to bring in other sources). Formatting counts here, so make sure to italicize where appropriate and watch which words you are capitalizing!

6. Grammar and Writing Quality (4 points)

- Few psychology courses are as writing intensive as Research Methods (especially Research Methods Two next semester!). As such, I want to make sure that you develop writing skills early. This is something that needs special attention, so make sure to proofread your papers carefully.
- Avoid run-on sentences, sentence fragments, spelling errors, and grammar errors. Writing quality will become more important in future papers, but this is where you should start to hone your writing skills.
- We will give you feedback on your papers, but I recommend seeking some help from the FIU writing center to make sure your paper is clear, precise, and covers all needed material. I also recommend asking a few of your group members to read over your paper and make suggestions. You can do the same for them!

The key point is that your experimental paper should describe a “position” that you have taken with respect to the content of the article. Please note that you do not need to refer to any other sources other than the article on which you have chosen to write your paper. However, you are welcome to refer to additional sources if you choose.

Other guidelines for the article critique papers

- 1). Pay attention to the page length requirements – 1 page for the title page, 1.5 pages to 3 pages for the summary, 1.5 pages to 3 pages for the critique, one or two paragraphs for the brief summary, and 1 page for the references page. If you are under the minimum, we will deduct points. If you go over the maximum, we are a little more flexible (you can go over by half page or so), but we want you to try to keep it to the maximum page.
- 2). Page size is 8 1/2 X 11” with all 4 margins set one inch on all sides. You **must** use 12-point Times New Roman font (Note: these instructions are in 12 point Times New Roman font).
- 3). As a general rule, ALL paragraphs and sentences are double spaced in APA papers. This includes the spacing in your Paper I: Article Critique Paper. It even includes the references, so make sure to double space EVERYTHING
- 4). When summarizing the article in your own words, you need not continually cite the article throughout the rest of your critique. Nonetheless, you should follow proper referencing procedures, which means that:
 - If you are inserting a direct quote from any source, it must be enclosed in quotations and followed by a parenthetical reference to the source. “Let’s say I am directly quoting this current sentence and the next. I would then cite it with the author name, date of publication, and the page number for the direct quote” (Winter, 2013, p . 4).
 1. Note: We will deduct points if you quote more than once per page, so keep quotes to a minimum. Paraphrase instead, but make sure you still give the original author credit for the material by citing him or using the author’s name (“In this article, Smith noted that ...” or “In this article, the authors noted that...”)
 - If you choose to reference any source other than your chosen article, it must be listed in a reference list.
- 5). PLEASE use a spell checker to avoid unnecessary errors. Proofread everything you write. I actually recommend reading some sentences aloud to see if they flow well, or getting family or friends to read your work. Writing quality will become more important in future papers, so you should start working on that now!
- **If you have any questions about the articles, your ideas, or your writing, please ask. Although we won’t be able to review entire drafts of papers before they are handed in, we are very willing to discuss problems, concerns or issues that you might have.**