

ALTERNATIVE WRITING ASSIGNMENT

FALL 2025

DUE FRIDAY, November 28th

All students taking PSYC 2, 4, & 8 are required to either participate in research conducted in the Psychology Department or complete the alternative writing assignment.

Research participation is a voluntary process where you give informed consent for participation. If you do not want to participate in research, you have the option of carrying out the alternative writing assignment which will expose you to recent research in Psychology, even if only second-hand, by having you review reports of research studies that have recently been completed and published in reputable psychology research journals.

ARE YOU ENROLLED IN 2-3 COURSES REQUIRING RESEARCH PARTICIPATION?

If you are enrolled in multiple courses that require subject pool participation (i.e., PSYC 2, 4, & 8), you must complete a separate assignment for each class, summarizing different articles in each assignment.

EXCESSIVE NO-SHOWS

If you are completing this assignment because you have been removed from the subject pool due to excessive no-shows, and you had completed a portion of your required hours before your removal, you must complete all three parts to satisfy the requirement.

HOW TO SUBMIT YOUR ALTERNATIVE WRITING ASSIGNMENT

[Complete the online form on the Participating in Research for Course Credit webpage.](#) Upload your work for Part 1 & Part 3 as a MS Word or PDF file. Also upload the PDFs for the articles used for Part 2 & 3.

ASSESSMENT OF THE ALTERNATIVE WRITING ASSIGNMENT

The Psychology Department Human Subjects Committee will review your work. We will notify you and your instructor of the results of our evaluation by the end of Finals Week. Please contact Dr. Qin at qinj@csus.edu if you have any questions or concerns.

THERE ARE THREE PARTS TO THE ALTERNATIVE WRITING ASSIGNMENT. ALL PARTS MUST BE COMPLETED SATISFACTORILY TO RECEIVE CREDIT. SEE BELOW.

PART 1

Learning Objective: Define some major research methods/strategies used in Psychology research.

INSTRUCTIONS

In this section you should provide a definition for each of the following research strategies in Psychology and reflect on which method(s) interest you the most. Do not copy definitions from other sources word-for-word. You should instead put as much of it into your own words as you possibly can. Be sure to define each method clearly. You will need 3 – 4 sentences each for a complete definition.

- Naturalistic observation methods
- Survey/questionnaire methods
- True, randomized experimental methods
- Quasi-experimental methods
- N-of-1/single-subject/single-case methods

After defining the methods, write a separate paragraph (3 to 5 sentences) reflecting on the research method that interests you the most. Explain your reasoning and what aspects of this method appeal to you.

USE THE RIGHT RESOURCE

You should consult a “Psyc 8” level textbook – an introductory textbook in research design and methodology for psychological research. You will only receive credit for your assignment if you use appropriate sources such as these listed below. Do not cite web pages (e.g., Wikipedia).

Cozby, P. C., & Bates, S. C. (2012). *Methods in Behavioral Research* (11th ed). New York: McGraw-Hill.

Rosnow, R. L., & Rosenthal, R. (2012). *Beginning Behavioral Research: A Conceptual Primer* (7th ed). Pearson.

USE THE [CSUS ONESEARCH TOOL](#) TO FIND SOURCES

Use the search terms “psychology research methods,” “psychological research methods,” and “behavioral research methods”. You should find several suitable books available to you online. Use a book published within the past 10 years in order to be relatively current.

Provide a bibliographic reference for your sources. Do not copy definitions from these books word-for-word. Define the method in your own words.

PART 2

Learning Objective: Demonstrate psychology information literacy.

INSTRUCTIONS

Find two peer-reviewed, empirical research articles **published within the last 12 months**, preferably from the journals listed below. Non-empirical papers (e.g., reviews), articles older than 12 months, or articles from non-academic journals (e.g., Psychology Today), will *not* be approved.

- Developmental Psychology
- Group Dynamics: Theory, Research, and Practice
- Health Psychology
- Journal of Applied Psychology
- Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis
- Journal of Counseling Psychology
- Journal of Educational Psychology
- Journal of Experimental Psychology: Applied
- Journal of Experimental Psychology: General
- Journal of Experimental Psychology: Human Perception and Performance
- Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory, and Cognition
- Journal of Personality and Social Psychology
- Neuropsychology
- Psychological Assessment
- Psychology and Aging
- Psychology of Women Quarterly

HOW TO FIND ARTICLES

Go to the library's [Journal Search](#) link and type in the title of the journal you want to read. Click on the link for online access, which will take you to the journal's website. Scroll through the table of contents for issues published within the last 12 months and find two articles to use for this assignment.

IMPORTANT ADDITIONAL DETAILS

The articles must be “**empirical studies**” which means they are write-ups of actual studies that are carried out, and for this assignment they must be studies on *human* subjects (i.e., not animals).

The articles you critique for this assignment must describe empirical research that uses one of the research methods listed below. Each article should use different research methods. Identify the research methods used in each article.

- Naturalistic observation methods
- Survey/questionnaire methods
- Qualitative research methods
- Experimental methods
- N-of-1/single-subject/single-case

Save PDF copies of each article. Identify key phrases in the article that directly relate to your answers for the Part 3 questions. Highlight or underline only these phrases – entire paragraphs or sections. Be selective and focus on the most relevant information that supports your responses. Submit the completed PDFs with your assignment.

PART 3

Learning Objective: Interpret psychological research.

INSTRUCTIONS

Write a 1000-word summary and critique document for each article you chose in Part 2, carefully following the format guidelines below.

Each article summary and critique must be at least 1000 words (excluding title and references).

SUMMARY AND CRITIQUE DOCUMENT FORMAT GUIDELINES

Include sections 1-10 below for each document. Use separate headings and numbered subheadings, as shown below, so we can easily see your response to each section. Cite specific page numbers, table/figure numbers, or direct quotes from the article to support your points.

Article Summary

1. Summarize the **background and purpose** of the study.
2. Describe the **methodology** and *clearly* identify which type of design was used in the study (i.e., from your review above in Part 1).
3. Describe the **participants** used in the research (how many, who were they, describe important characteristics).
4. Describe the **materials, tests, equipment** used in the research.
5. Briefly describe the **research procedure**. Describe what the participants did in the research?
6. Summarize the **key findings and implications**. (We do not expect you to understand all of the statistical tests – many of them are not taught to psychology students until their upper division methods courses or even graduate school – but glean some key findings and conclusions from the authors' own interpretations in their discussion section.

Article Critique

7. Provide your overall knee-jerk reactions to the study. What stood out as particularly strong or interesting, and what stood out as weak, strange, or odd?
8. Then put yourself in the shoes of the participants and express any additional reactions you think you might have had to the study if you were one of them.
9. Finally, comment on how this study helped (or possibly didn't help) to further your understanding of psychology and psychological research methods.
10. Include a brief statement (2-3 sentences) confirming that you have read the articles and the summary and critique you submit are of your own. While you may use AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT) for brainstorming or improving clarity, the core analysis, critiques, and reflections must come from your own understanding. Submissions found to be AI-generated will *not* be approved.