Writing in the Field of Psychology Study Sheet

Goals for this Study Sheet

The goal of this study sheet is to break down the process of psychology paper.

Things to Know

Psychology papers can be tough, particularly if you don’t know the subject matter or have a hard time researching different aspects of a field considered so new and largely unexplored. Most papers (research or reports) will be geared towards informing the reader (familiar or unfamiliar) with the subject. Tight, concise writing is the key here. Utilizing your language as efficiently as possible to convey as many ideas in tightly written sentences and specifically referenced concepts. Try to explore said concepts as much as possible with a clinical word choice that remains pretty accessible to a wider audience.

Psychology is defined as “the scientific study of the human mind and its functions, especially those affecting behavior in a given context.” There are many different diverging fields—psychotraumatology, clinical neuropsychology, sleep psychology, to name a few—and so the language and tone you present is dependent on the niche study and the type of paper you’d like to write.

Research Summary/Literary Review

- Create an outline and use it as a roadmap. Start from the top. That is, think about your actual question of interest—and start there—clearly and explicitly.
- Write how you speak—imagine that you are telling these ideas to someone—and always assume that someone is a layperson, someone who is not familiar with the material.
• Make the paper as long as it needs to be to explain fully and effectively—don’t let page limits drive your process (to the extent that this is possible).
• Intersperse longer sentences with shorter ones to better the flow of reading for the reader. Do your research well and become well-versed in the topic, even when it seems exhausting. You’ll want to summarize easily and seem comfortable with discussing it.

Empirical or Research Papers (APA)

• Write a good outline—don’t be afraid to flesh it out. It gives you a very clear way to streamline your thoughts and compartmentalize your research.
• The abstract should be precise and accurate—let it be a tightly written summary of the coming topic
• Try not to lean too hard on past research or overly describe past research. This is your paper—exhibit your knowledge! If you mention the work of others, do so for a purpose.
• Be clear, write with purpose, cite properly, and be impersonal!