

Writing Bock IB: Three Title Pages, Abstracts, and Thesis Statements

The purpose of this assignment is to give you some experience constructing title pages, abstracts, and thesis statements for APA-format research reports.

What specific topic or topics in psychology interest you? Your answer(s) may be broad. For example, you might be interested in child development or the emotions. If your interests are this broad, for the purposes of this assignment you will need to narrow your interests. For example, if you are interested in child development, you might narrow this interest down to a topic such as “visual self-recognition.”

After you have narrowed your interest, you will need to search our library database, select applicable abstracts of interest, construct three title pages for the three abstracts, and write thesis statements for those abstracts.

IMPORTANT! This assignment requires you to select abstracts for experimental articles only. This has implications for your choice of interest. Sometimes it is very difficult—if not impossible—to find experimental articles that apply directly to a given area of interest.

PART I: FINDING YOUR ABSTRACTS

1. Go to the main page of our College Web Site. Then, under “Academics,” select “Library.”
2. At “Start by subject,” select “Psychology.” Then select the “Articles” tab near the top.
3. Select “PsycInfo.”
4. Now you need to enter your search terms. Which search terms should you? Suppose you’re interested in developmental psychology and perception. To be more specific, suppose you’re interested in neonatal color vision. You might use the search terms “neonatal” and “color” and “vision.” Work it out. To reduce the number of titles and abstracts you’ll view, you might limit your date range to one or a couple of decades and maybe even years. It depends on what you’re after.
5. Check your results. Identify titles and abstracts that appear to be what you’re looking for. Once you identify a selection—maybe 10 or so—click on the title of one of the articles to see the full record. Proceed to make your selections.

******Select journal articles only! No books or book chapters! Also, it will help if you find articles that have no more than two or three authors. A single author is the simplest approach.**

PART II: CONSTRUCTING TITLE AND ABSTRACT PAGES

Remember that you’re constructing a title page, abstract page, and thesis statement for each of your three selections.

1. Open a blank document in MS Word. To get your first title page started, follow the directions for our Research Report Template assignment (IA) to construct a manuscript page header, page number, etc.
2. For the first title page and abstract page, type the first three words of the title of your abstract into your manuscript page header. After you’re finished, make sure your document is formatted for double-space. (In Word and at the top of your document—but not in the manuscript page header—select “format,” “paragraph,” “spacing,” and in “Line spacing” select “Double.”)
3. Now consult our textbook (or other source) to construct a Running head. (Remember that the “h” in “head” will be lower-case!) You will type this on the first line of the document, below the manuscript page

header. What is the maximum number of letters and spaces that can be used for a Running head? What is the running head supposed to indicate to readers?

4. Press the “Enter” key to go down the proper number of spaces for your title. Type in the title of the paper you have before you on the Library Web Site. Remember: First letters of all “important” words will be capitalized.

IMPORTANT NOTE! The most recent (6th) edition of the APA Publication Manual differs from our textbook on how to format article titles and sections. For our purposes, **all titles and section headings will be in boldface, with no italics!**

5. Enter the author name(s) according to APA format, with their institutional affiliation(s) below the name(s).

6. Hit “Ctrl-Enter” on your keyboard to begin a new page.

7. Type “Abstract” and center it on the page.

8. Copy the abstract from the Library Web Site and paste it into your document. Make sure you use block format—no indentations on the left and ragged-right justification. **Be sure to remove all of the “rights reserved” information at the end of the abstract**, e.g., “(PsycINFO Database Record (c) 2009 APA, all rights reserved).”

9. Start a new page and do all of the above again for your two other article abstracts. **Again, make sure you are using experimental article abstracts!**

PART III: WRITING THESIS STATEMENTS

When all of the above is finished, it is time to write theses statements for each abstract you have selected in accordance with APA writing and formatting standards.

The thesis statement, which is found at some point in the Introduction to any research report—often toward the end—should include words pertaining to the general topic(s) of interest (e.g., care-giving and attachment in human neonates) and words pertaining to the relation of relevant variables.

Thesis statements may include one or more predictions about the outcome of an experiment or other type of research (e.g., “We expected that . . .”, “We predicted that . . .”, “We hypothesized that . . .”, etc.). In other words, the thesis statement may read like a directly-stated hypothesis. But the hypothesis may be stated indirectly.

1. Position your cursor one (double-spaced) line below your first abstract. Then type “Thesis Statement:”

2. Type your thesis statement. You should be able to do this by noting certain key information provided in the abstract. What is the general topic of interest? What are the relevant variables and their relations? What must have been predicted by the authors?

3. Repeat this procedure for your second and third abstracts. To guide your writing of these thesis statements, consult your textbook and check out the two examples that follow this page. (The first is from our textbook.)

****After you’re finished with this assignment—and assuming you’re finished with the first portion of this Writing Block (IA, the Research Report Template)—e-mail your work to tissawma@potdam.edu. **Your e-mail should have two attachments:** your Research Report Template (IA) and the document to which these directions apply (IB). Remember the rules for naming your files. Here’s an example of how this one should be named: “Tissaw Michael Block IB.” **NO .docx DOCUMENTS PLEASE!!! (.doc or .rtf ONLY!!!)**

Abstract

The present study explored the effects of stereotype deviation in the music industry on people's perceptions of performers. One hundred college students (48 men, 52 women) examined a profile of a fictitious performer containing a picture, a brief biography, and a lyric sample. As part of a 2-way between-subjects design, participants made judgments about either a Black or a White musician who performed either rap or country music. The results showed that a Black rap performer was rated more favorably than a Black country performer, and a White country performer was rated more favorably than a White rap performer. Consistent with predictions, people who violate societal expectations are judged more harshly than are people who conform to societal expectations, particularly in cases involving preexisting racial stereotypes.

Thesis Statement: Consistent with previous research (Jackson et al., 1993; Knight et al., 2001), we expected participants to judge performers who behave consistently with social norms (i.e., Black rap artists and White country singers) more favorably than performers who deviate from social expectations (i.e., White rap artists and Black country performers).

Abstract

Conducted 2 experiments with 64 infants (aged 26-33 days) to test the hypothesis that the detection of shape invariants across different modalities is a fundamental characteristic of the human perceptual-cognitive system, available without the need for learned correlations. Testing began with a brief familiarization period during which Ss tactually explored an object. Ss were then shown a pair of visual shapes, only one of which matched the tactual stimulus. Visual fixation to the matching vs nonmatching shape was then recorded. Ss recognized which of the 2 visually perceived shapes matched the one they had previously explored tactually, thus supporting the hypothesis. Results indicate that humans can recognize intermodal matches without months of experience in simultaneous tactual-visual exploration.

Thesis Statement: In the two experiments on shape-invariant detection in the visual and tactile sensory modalities, we expected infants to look significantly longer at the visual shape that matched the shape of the tactile stimulus.