

WRITING EMPIRICAL RESEARCH REPORTS

APA STYLE

6th edition

Running head:

50 characters max, all CAPS
shorten title; not bolded

Key words in caps; 10-12 words

Title of Research Project
Your Name
Southern Utah University } double
space;
not
bolded

Dr. Lynn White
PSY2010
Section XX

The Title Page

Page 2

The Abstract

Shortened title

The shortened version of your title (i.e. running head) appears on every page

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Abstract

Centered left to right

100-120 words in length

state your research question

number of participants, important participant

characteristics and local demographics

a brief description of the procedure

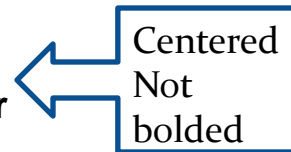
Findings (do not report exact statistics)

The results suggest that... or implications

**Remember: abstract is 1 paragraph long
double spaced
do not indent
include key & interesting info**

Shortened title

Repeat title of paper



3

- 1) **general introduction to the topic under investigation**
- 2) **discuss findings of previous studies relevant to the present study**
- 3) **state the purpose of the present study how/why is the study justified (what is it's niche?)**
- 4) **Briefly describe your method**
- 5) **state your predictions include a rationale (based on previous findings or theory)**
- 6) **state possible theoretical/applied implications**

**Remember: intro is funnel shaped: general to specific
use past tense, indent paragraphs 5-7 spaces
do not reveal what you found
write in complete sentences & paragraphs
do NOT number the paragraphs**

Page 3 The Intro.

Page # Method

Begins where
intro ends – not
always on a new
page

Shortened title

#

Participants

Method

Centered
&
bolded

bolded

Indicate number of participants & describe pertinent participant variables (e.g. gender, age if known) and relevant demographics (low-middle SES, rural, southwestern US)

describe how were participants recruited or selected for observation

Describe any reimbursement or incentives (n/a for naturalistic observation)

Remember: information needs to be sufficiently detailed to permit a literal replication

Page # Method

Begins where
“Participants”
end – not always
on a new page

Shortened title

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Materials ← **bolded**

If using mostly equipment, call this section “Apparatus”

describe the materials, but not how they were used

describe the materials in the order in which they were used

include as much detail as possible so that the materials can be reproduced by someone else

do not describe the obvious (pens, paper...)

use the metric system for measurements (common units are abbrev.)

Page # Method

Begins where
“Materials” end –
not always on a
new page

Shortened title

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Procedure ← **bolded**

Describe everything you did in the order you did it.

Describe how participants were assigned to groups and what the groups were (if applicable)

Indicate time/day of week participants were tested or observed (if relevant)

If testing different groups... go from the general to the specific (describe what all groups had in common - then describe how they differed)

summarize any instructions (actual instructions can be put in an appendix)

If design is VERY complicated, can include another section, “Design” and perhaps include a diagram

Note that not all of this will apply to naturalistic observation and/or survey research where there is no interaction/intervention or where there are no groups per se

Page # Results

Begins where
“Procedure” ends
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new page

Shortened title

Results

Centered
&
bolded

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**Describe what data was collected or
calculated (frequencies, percentages, means)**

Report the results ... do not interpret them

**If you have several results to report, present
them in a table or figure (refer reader to the
table or figure)**

**e.g. “The mean latency for each group is
summarized in Figure 1“**

**Place tables and figures (in that order) after
the reference list or in the body of the paper –
ask your prof. where he/she wants them**

**If presenting results in a graph/table, do not
also present them in text**

Page # Discuss -ion

Begins where
“Results” end –
not always on a
new page

Shortened title

Discussion



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interpret the results and draw conclusions (move from specific to general)

Can usually start this section with “The results of the present study support (or do not support) the hypothesis that...”

Summarize the findings that support/do not support the hypothesis

Answer the questions/issues raised in the introduction

Explain & discuss your findings with respect to the previous literature.

If your results contradict someone else’s, explain why

Discuss what the next step should be (future research)

Always
begins on
a new
page



Shortened title

References

Centered,
not bolded

#

There are so MANY rules here, your best bet is to use an APA publication reference guide (for the 6th ed.) Maybe try: <http://www.citationmachine.net/> (be sure to select APA 6TH).

Only include primary references for sources you cited in the body of your paper

Arranged alphabetically, double spaced, the second and subsequent lines of a reference are indented

Do not include database information (e.g. EBSCO, Medline, psychInfo) or the date the material was retrieved

Whenever possible, include the document's digital object identifier (doi)

If you cannot locate the doi (and not all articles have them) you can look them up at: http://www.crossref.org/o5researchers/37guest_login.html

TABLES

Each table must be referred to previously in the text of the report

each table has a short but descriptive title placed directly on the top of the table (title is italicized)

tables go at the end of the manuscript (before all the figures, if you are using figures) or in the body of the text (ask your prof)

Keep them simple:

do not use vertical lines

use horizontal lines sparingly

double or single space within

table – whatever makes the table


easiest to understand

A “Note.” may be included

underneath the table to explain the

table and any and all abbreviations

Begins on a new page, after the reference section



Shortened title

#

Table 1

Mean Marital Satisfaction

	mean	SEM
Single	85	3
Married	80	10
Divorced	75	5
Co-habit	95	2

Note. Describe here what the table show's. Explain What the abbreviations mean, for example, SEM = Standard error of the mean.

FIGURES

number all figures (even if there is only one)

Each figure must be referred to previously in the text of the report

label each axis

each graph has a caption placed directly below the figure. The caption is a concise explanation of the figure and serves as the title for the figure

Figures should be simple, easy to interpret, minimal ink, black and white (no color)

Shortened title

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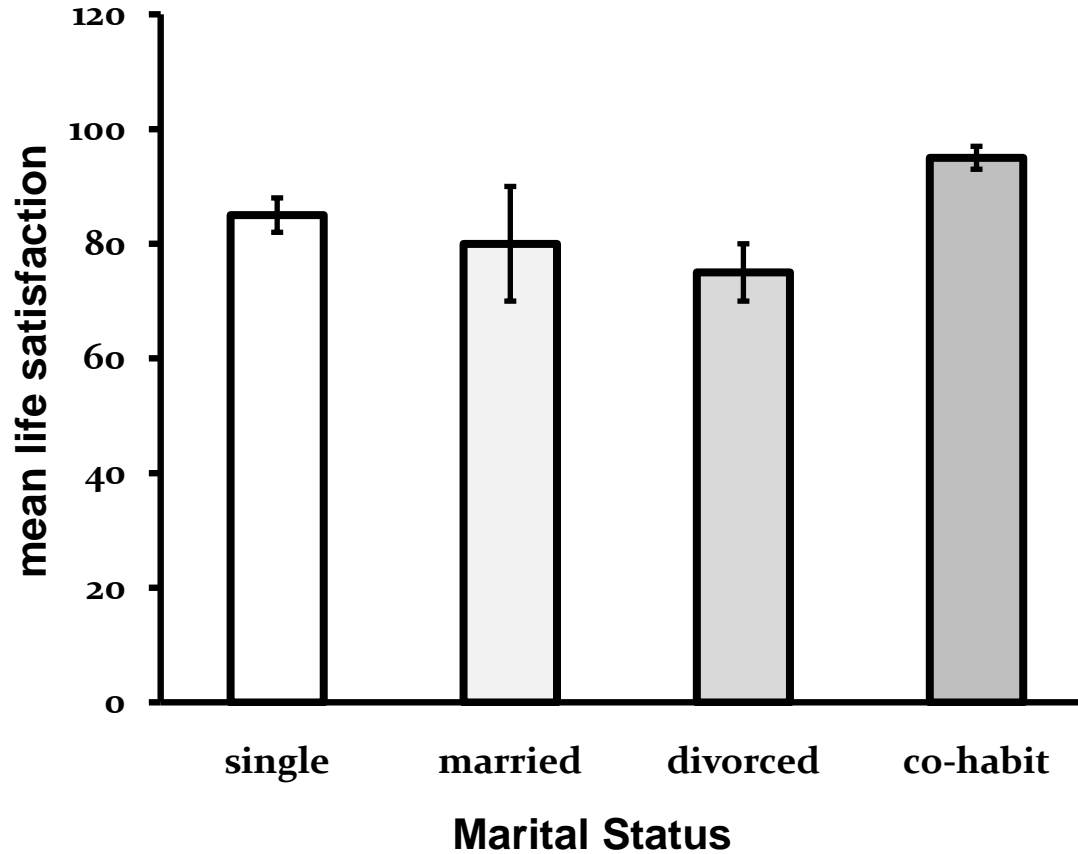


Figure X. Include here a descriptive phrase, and any info needed to clarify the figure. Explain units of measurements, symbols, and abbreviations.

Begins on a new page, after the tables (if any)