

Introduction to Psychology Writing Assignments



One of the requirements of this course is to complete three writing assignments. You may complete a fourth assignment for extra credit.

Enclosed in this packet are the guidelines, instructions, and due dates for the assignments. Please keep the following expectations in mind:

1. Each assignment is worth 25 points.
2. **Read instructions carefully** and be sure to complete all aspects of the assignments.
3. **Be thorough and complete** in your work. Simple "yes/no" answers or "I agree" comments are not sufficient.
4. The assignments were developed to correspond to chapters/topics we will be studying throughout the term. You will get the most out of the assignments if they are done while – or shortly after – we study a particular topic/chapter. Therefore, you will need to turn in your work by the deadlines designated in your syllabus and on the assignment sheet. **No late assignments will be accepted.**
5. All written assignments must be **typed and double-spaced.**

HOW WILL YOUR ASSIGNMENTS BE GRADED

Each of your assignments is worth 25 points and will generally be graded by the following criteria:

1. Demonstration of critical thinking, scholarship, and ability to connect and apply the material
2. Comprehensiveness and completeness of your responses
3. Adherence to the written instructions
4. Spelling and grammar

25 - 23 points – A:

Exceptional work -- You have not only met the expectations of the assignment, but your work would be difficult to improve upon. Compared to your classmates, you've demonstrated an exceptional understanding of key concepts and the ability to apply them. You have followed all of the instructions and guidelines; written the ideas in your own words; cited any sources (including your textbook) you may have used; and have a negligible number of grammar/spelling errors.

22 - 20 points – B:

Good work – Compared to your classmates, you have demonstrated a good understanding of the material and can apply it to your work. You have followed all of the instructions and guidelines; written the ideas in your own words; cited any sources you may have used (including your textbook), and have a minimal number of grammar/spelling errors.

19 - 17 points - C:

Meets basic expectations – Compared to your classmates, you have demonstrated learning and general understanding of the material, but have missed some opportunities to apply key concepts. Wording is your own, and you have cited any sources that you have used (including your textbook). There may be some formatting and instructional errors, and/or there are several spelling/grammar errors.

16 - 14 points – D:

Needs Improvement – Compared to your classmates, your work is not complete and/or you have missed several opportunities to demonstrate your understanding of the material and ability to apply key concepts. You neglected to follow two or more instructions or formatting guidelines. Spelling and grammatical errors are numerous and distracting. There are some errors in providing proper citations.

0 points – F

Your wording is not your own and you have neglected to provide proper citation and credit for your sources. You have neglected to answer a number of questions. It appears that you put in very little time or effort toward this assignment. You failed to turn your assignment in on time.

THE SENSES CHALLENGE

PURPOSE:

This assignment corresponds to Chapter 3 of your textbook. The purpose is to give you the opportunity to take the “Senses Challenge” and learn how easily our perceptions can be influenced by illusion and experience.

PROCEDURE:

Visit the *Senses Challenge* at

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/science/humanbody/body/interactives/senseschallenge/senses.swf>

(There is also a link on the Quia page; scroll down about half way down.)

1. Take the senses challenge.
2. After each question on the challenge, you will be provided with the correct answer. Read the explanation before moving onto the next question.
3. When you have finished taking the challenge, write a short paper (at least one page, typed and double-spaced) discussing what surprised you or what you learned. Try to discuss at least one thing about each of the five senses. (If you already know everything there is to know about the senses and are past being surprised, discuss why you think most people are fooled by the optical or auditory illusions.)
4. Be sure to include your name and class section number on the upper left hand of your paper.
5. Remember no late homework assignments will be accepted. If you cannot attend class, email you paper as an attachment or arrange for someone to drop it off at the Student Services Office.

Assignment Format:

1. A paper at least 1.5 pages long, not including any reference section
2. Typed and double spaced, with Arial (10 point font) or Times New Roman (11 or 12 point font) and 1 inch margins
3. Proofread for spelling and grammatical errors – and indent the first line of each new paragraph.

Assignment # 2 – OPTION A

Choose one of the following four assignment options (A or B), and complete your paper by the appropriate due date.

Due by Date: Tuesday, April 20 (For Sections 7b)
 Wed., April 21 (For Section 4a & 4b)

USING MNEMONICS

Mind Tool's (<http://www.mindtools.com/memory.html>) website on memory techniques and mnemonics will help you apply the concepts taught in Chapter 5 to improve your own memory. This reviews the underlying principles of effective mnemonic systems, then introduces several specific mnemonics and applies them to the remembering of names, dates, telephone numbers, and so on. Of special interest to you will be the section "Using mnemonics for exams." (You will also find link to this website, *Improving Your Memory through Mnemonics*, available on the Quia Class Page; scroll about half-way down to find it.)

What to Do:

Visit the website listed above; read the first article, *Memory Techniques (start here)*, and then choose **three** other articles/links to read. Then answer the questions below (assume a short essay format and means typed and double spaced). You will be graded on the thoroughness and completeness of your responses.

1. Identify and describe three specific mnemonic techniques you learned about and explain how each of these mnemonic devices may be applied to studying for an exam, a speech, lists, or other information. (Be sure to explain this information in your own words.)
2. Next, develop and describe a mnemonic to help you remember key concepts/vocabulary for the following essay questions. In order to receive full credit, you must come up with your own mnemonics for each. (The intention is for you to practice developing your own mnemonics. You will only receive credit for creating the mnemonic, not simply answering the question.)
 - a. Identify and describe the two types of LTM information. (Chapter 5)
 - b. Explain both the repressed memory and false memory controversies. What is the difference between a false memory and a repressed memory? Why may they be confused? (This one might be tricky, but figure out what will be meaningful to you)

Assignment Format:

1. A paper about 2 pages long, not including any reference section
2. Typed and double spaced, with Arial (10 point font) or Times New Roman (11 or 12 point font) and 1 inch margins
3. Proofread for spelling and grammatical errors – and indent the first line of each paragraph.
4. Provide in-text citations and reference any of your sources using APA format

Option B is described on the next page.

MEASURING INTELLIGENCE ON-LINE

You will need to take three intelligence tests to evaluate and compare (You will find web links to them on the Quia Page).

STEP ONE: TAKE THE TESTS

- First, visit the www.highqsociety.org website. Find and click on the “I.Q. Tests.” There are two different types of I.Q. tests available for you to take. Look at the descriptions and explanations of each test and then choose **one** and complete the test according to the directions.
- Next, visit the www.iqtest.com website, take their test; click on “Let Me Take This Test Now”. (Note, after completing the test, you will be offered to purchase additional tests and certificates – this is not necessary to get your free results! They will be sent to your email address.)
- Finally, visit the following website and take the Multiple Intelligence test/survey :
http://www.bgfl.org/bgfl/custom/resources_fnp/client_fnp/ks3/ict/multiple_int/questions/questions.cfm

*** After you take these assessments, you may be invited to buy detailed results or become a paid member of some organization. Ignore these! You do not need to purchase anything for this assignment.*

STEP TWO: RESPOND TO THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS (Essay-style)

1. Briefly identify and describe each of the assessments you took. How did the three scores compare? (You do not need to share your scores with the instructor.) What might account for the similarity or difference?
2. What variables may have affected your score?
3. What evidence do the websites provide about their validity? (You may need to explore the site before answering this questions.)
4. Which test do you think is the more valid measurement of intelligence? Explain why.
5. Based on all you have learned about assessing intelligence, summarize the benefits and limitations of Intelligence Tests. Support your answer with facts and research.

ASSIGNMENT FORMAT:

1. A paper about 2 pages long, not including any reference section
2. Typed and double spaced, with Arial (10 point font) or Times New Roman (11 or 12 point font) and 1 inch margins
3. Proofread for spelling and grammatical errors
4. Provide in-text citations and reference any of your sources using APA format

Assignment # 3 – OPTION A

Choose one of the following four assignment options (A or B), and complete your paper by the appropriate due date.

Due by Date: Thursday, April 29 (For Sections 7b)
Monday, May 5 (For Section 4a & 4b)

Identity Crisis in Popular Media

Purpose: This assignment is related to Chapter 9 of your textbook. It is intended to apply identity theories to current media. Before you begin you will need to read about Marcia's and Erickson's theories of adolescent identity.

Type/Length of activity: Research and paper

PROCEDURES & CONTENT

Gather Data:

Choose a piece of music or literature that expresses at least one of the common themes in adolescent identity crisis. Some examples would be finding an occupation, deciding on personal values, religious identity, or sexual identity.

Analyze the Data:

1. What audience is targeted by the piece?
2. What is the main point(s) or the main plot of the piece?
3. How does the piece capture the essence of Erikson's stage of identity versus role confusion and/or Marcia's theory of identity status, which includes identity achievement, moratorium, foreclosure, and identity diffusion?

Write Your Report:

1. Introduce the topic of adolescent identity crisis.
2. Summarize the main points or the plot of the piece.
3. Compare the main points or plot to Erikson's stage of Identity versus Role Confusion and/or Marcia's identity theory.
4. Conclude with a consideration of how such music or literature helps adolescents understand and/or work out their identity crisis.

ASSIGNMENT FORMAT:

1. A paper about 2 pages long
2. Typed, double spaced, with 1 inch margins
3. Proofread for spelling and grammatical errors – and indent paragraphs
4. Provide in-text citations and reference any sources using APA format

The Effects of Psychoactive Drugs

Purpose: This assignment corresponds to information from Chapter 10 of the textbook, and is intended to better acquaint students with the effects of psychoactive drugs.

PROCEDURE AND CONTENT

Visit *PSYCHQUEST* at <http://bcs.worthpublishers.com/myers6e/content/psychquest/index.htm> and select, ***How Do Psychoactive Drugs Affect Us?*** (There is also a link on the Quia page; scroll down about two-thirds of the way down.)

Based on the information learned from the module, answer the following questions “essay-style” **in your own words**.

1. What are the four methods by which psychoactive drugs may enter our bloodstream?
2. What are the three phases our bodies go through when we are under the influence of psychoactive drugs?
3. Which division of the nervous system is primarily altered by the effects of psychoactive drugs?
4. What are the three major classes of psychoactive drugs?
5. Briefly describe how amphetamines and cocaine **differ** in how they work to produce their psychoactive affects on our bodies.
6. Briefly describe how nicotine and caffeine **differ** in how they work to produce their psychoactive affects on our bodies.
7. Briefly explain how morphine and alcohol **are similar** in how they work to produce their psychoactive affects on our bodies.
8. Identify and explain the two ways one can develop "tolerance" to psychoactive drugs.
9. Which two areas of the brain, and which neurotransmitter are involved in addiction to psychoactive drugs such as morphine?
10. According to research on the mechanisms of drug addiction, what is the most critical factor in addiction?

ASSIGNMENT FORMAT:

1. A paper at least 2 pages long, not including any reference section
2. Typed and double spaced, with Arial (10 point font) or Times New Roman (11 or 12 point font) and 1 inch margins
3. Proofread for spelling and grammatical errors
4. Provide in-text citations and reference any of your sources using APA format

Assignment 4 -- OPTION A

Choose one of the following four assignment options (A or B), and complete your paper by the appropriate due date.

Due by Date: Tuesday, May 18 (For Sections 7b)
Wednesday, May 19 (For Section 4b & 4a)

PSYCHOLOGICAL DISORDERS & THE MOVIES **

PROCEDURE: Watch one of the movies listed below and discuss the main characters and/or plot line in terms of psychological disorders and/or treatment. (Some of the movies portray several characters struggling with a disorder; you need to focus only on the one or two that most interests you.) Address the following questions:

1. What psychological disorder was illustrated in this film? Did the person meet the criteria for “abnormal” in this portrayal?
2. What symptoms of mental illness did you see in the movie? After considering typical symptoms and behaviors for this disorder, determine the extent to which you believe this was a realistic portrayal of this disorder.
3. Were any causal factors for the character’s disorder suggested in the film? If so, which ones?
4. What types of treatment, if any, did the person in the film receive? Provide specific examples. Based on what you’ve learned, is this form typical for individuals with this disorder? Why or why not?
5. What impact did the person’s disorder have on others in his/her life? Do you think the impact was realistically portrayed? Why or why not?
6. After viewing the movie, what do you think it would be like to live with this mental illness?
7. What was your overall reaction to the movie and how mental illness was portrayed?

Movie Options: (These movies have been previewed and pre-selected for their content and relevance; please do not make your own substitutions without prior approval; **failure to do so will result in a zero score.**)

- * *A Beautiful Mind* (Psychosis)
- * *As Good As It Gets* (Anxiety Disorder)
- *Benny and Joon* (Psychosis)
- * *Clean and Sober* (Subst Related Disorder)
- * *The Deer Hunter* (Stress Disorder)
- * *The Fisher King* (Variety of Disorders)
- *Gia* (Substance Related / Mood Disorder)
- * *Girl Interrupted* (Variety of Disorders)
- * *Off the Map* (Mood Disorder)
- * *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest* (Variety of Disorders)
- * *Ordinary People* (Mood Disorder)
- *Rachel at the Wedding* (Substance Related Disorders)
- * *Sybil* (Stress Disorder)
- * *Three Faces of Eve* (Stress Disorder)
- * *Transamerica* (Gender Identity Disorder)
- *Twenty-eight Days w/ Sandra Bullock* (Substance Related Disorders)
- * *What about Bob?* (Anxiety Disorder)
- *What’s Eating Gilbert Grape*

* Indicates that these titles are available through the Omaha Public Library. Many are also available at video rental stores throughout the city. Check online for details.

ASSIGNMENT FORMAT:

1. A paper at least 2 pages long, not including any reference section
2. Typed and double spaced, with Arial (10 point font) or Times New Roman (11 or 12 point font) and 1 inch margins
3. Proofread for spelling and grammatical errors
4. Provide in-text citations and reference any of your sources using APA format

Attitude & Behavior Change

PURPOSE:

This assignment corresponds to Chapter 13 of your textbook. The purpose is to help you identify and apply social psychological concepts, especially those associated with attitude and behavior change (and determine which is the easier to change – hence the title), and techniques used to persuade behavior. Therefore, you should read the chapter before completing this writing assignment, paying particular attention to pages 562-571, and 581-590.

PROCEDURE:

Imagine that you are a professional change agent and that you have been hired to bring about change in one of the following areas:

1. Get people to stop discriminating against a particular minority group (e.g., by hiring more people from this group or by changing their attitude toward it).
2. Get people to adopt one or more conservation behaviors (e.g., recycling, wearing seatbelts, volunteerism, reducing gasoline consumption, etc.).
3. Get people to vote for a particular candidate who is currently running far behind in the polls.
4. Some other problem that interests you.

Develop your strategies for changing one of the above behaviors. Use the research and theories described in your text to back up your choices of strategies. In a 2 page, double-spaced paper, explain why you are using the various strategies. In addition, answer the following questions:

1. What problem area have you chosen to work on?
2. List the specific goal(s) that you have set in this change program (this is like an operational definition!). In other words, what actual behavior(s) should show change as a result of your efforts (e.g., increased number of hours volunteered per week, reduced automobile driving, etc.).
3. What techniques would you use to produce the changes listed in question #2; give specific, concrete examples. For instance, what would the ad look like, what would you say to people as you conducted your door to door campaign, or what incentives or rewards would you give?
4. What are the theoretical principles on which your techniques are based? For example, giving everyone a nickel if they recycle a plastic or glass bottle is a technique based on reinforcement principles. (Remember Chapter 4?!)
5. How would you know if your program has been successful? That is, how will you actually assess the amount of change in the behavior(s) that you listed in question #2?

ASSIGNMENT FORMAT:

1. A paper at least 2 pages long, not including any reference section
2. Typed and double spaced, with Arial (10 point font) or Times New Roman (11 or 12 point font) and 1 inch margins
3. Proofread for spelling and grammatical errors
4. Provide in-text citations and reference any of your sources using APA format

Assignment Checklist

Before you turn in any written work, be sure you ask yourself the following:

- When is it due? _____
 - Is it typed and double-spaced?
 - Did I answer all of the questions?
 - Are my answers complete and thorough?
 - Did I explain answers in my own words and avoid copying text from my textbook or other sources?
 - If I needed to take information directly from another source, did I use quotation marks and cite my source (including the textbook), by indicating the author, publication date, and page number?
 - When I provide my opinion, belief, or idea about something, did I also explain why and support my answer?
 - Is my work proofread and free from grammatical errors?
 - Do I understand what I wrote?
 - If someone who did not know much about the topic I'm writing about, understand it better after reading my paper?
 - Do I have a backup copy saved?
-