

PSY 410 – Cognitive Psychology. J.P. Toth.

Guide to Final Paper Grade

Your Final Paper will be graded in terms of the following six criteria:

- Overall Quality, Originality, and Amount of Effort put into the report.
- Clarity of writing (includes both grammar & conceptual aspects).
- Use & Integration of Prior Literature.
- Research Design & Methods.
- Data Presentation & Statistical Analysis.
- Proper Use of APA format.

General Tips for Getting a Good Grade

1. The most important goal of a research report is that it is factual & informative. This is best achieved by being succinct & clear, and avoiding personal feelings & opinions.
2. Reports should be well organized. This is best achieved by using an "hourglass" structure [start broad, get specific, end broad] and by using the appropriate "formula" for each section in the paper (see "APA Format Example" on course webpage).
 - Intro = Background research, motivation for your study, & your hypotheses.
 - Methods = How your study was done (so that someone else could replicate it).
 - Results = How the data was handled + Descriptive & Inferential statistics.
 - Discussion = What the results mean in terms of the issues raised in the Intro.
3. Closely follow APA format.
4. In most cases, a measure of variability (e.g., SD) should always be presented with a mean. If you have only a few (4 or less) values to report, just put them in the text; otherwise, use an appropriately formatted table or figure. DO NOT include Excel spreadsheets or long lists of individual subject data.
5. Cite *empirical* research from peer-reviewed journals; newspaper or web articles (including Wikipedia) should be used rarely, if ever.
6. Relate your project to prior research in the field; this requires that you actually read and understand the research articles you are citing. And make sure to do this in the Discussion as well as the Introduction.
7. When you think you are finished, go back re-read your paper for clarity & appropriate APA formatting, making changes where needed. If you're unsure about whether a part (or all) of your report is clear, have someone else read it.