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| **Guidelines for Preparing a Research Proposal**  All rights reserved – Psi Beta (4.17.2023) |
| The proposed research will be completed while attending a 2-year institution, working under the guidance of a professor of psychology. For critically important writing guidance, see chapter 3 of the APA Publication Manual (7th edition). Also, visit the American Psychological Association Style website for additional guidance: <https://apastyle.apa.org/> |
| * Proposal length: Five (5) pages (not including references, tables, and figures). * Use 10 point, Times New Roman font, 1.5 line spacing. * Use the following section headings in the proposal: Method, Analytic Plan, Discussion, References. Do not have an Introduction heading. Each heading should be bolded and flush with the left margin.   **Title** - The title is a concise statement of the main topic of research and includes the variables or theoretical issues you have investigated and the relationship between them.   * Keep the title focused and succinct. (See APA Publication Manual 2.4 for additional guidance.) * Include an Author Note on the title page with contact information for the corresponding author.   **Abstract** – Provide an overview of the study. (APA Publication Manual 2.9 provides additional guidance on the abstract.)   * The abstract should not exceed 250 words. * An abstract should be written as a single paragraph without headings or indentations. * Keywords – These are words, phrases, or acronyms that describe key aspects of the paper and are used to help others find the proposal during a search.   + Provide three to five keywords that describe the content of the proposal.   + Write the label “*Keywords*:” (in italics) one line below the abstract, indented 0.5 in., followed by the keywords in lowercase and separated by commas. Capitalize proper nouns.   + Do not use end punctuation after the last keyword. (See APA Publication Manual 2.10.)   **Introduction** - Present the problem investigated, the central hypothesis, and questions or theories investigated.   * Do not use a heading for the introduction. * Begin - State the research problem and theoretical and or practical implication(s). * Review the most relevant scholarship (e.g., published in the last 10-15 years and applicable sample) - Cite previous fundamental research studies (at least five citations from peer-reviewed sources). Only cite sources you have read. All citations must conform to APA style (see APA Publication Manual Chapter 8). * Hypothesis, aims, and objectives – State one or more specific hypotheses, aims, and objective(s) including any secondary hypotheses (write in future tense).   **Method–** Tell us what you will do and how you will do it (write in future tense).   * Subsection for Participants:   + Participant characteristics – Describe the study population and proposed sample (expected size and demographics).   + Inclusion/exclusion criteria – Report criteria used to select or exclude participation in the study (e.g., age). * Subsection for Materials:   + Measures – Name and cite all primary measures and instrumentation and rationale for using them. Provide an APA style reference citation for each measure or scale adapted from a journal article, book, or another source. Try to provide psychometric information (e.g., reliability, validity) of the measures and instruments, including any ad hoc instruments created for this study. * Subsection for Procedure:   + Ethical standards – Explain ethical standards to be used in the study including things like informed consent, the anonymity of participants, maintaining the confidentiality of data, debriefing if necessary, or if your institution requires your study to be approved by an IRB or similar governing body.   + Design – Will this be a qualitative, quantitative, or mixed design? What type of methods will you use (surveys, interviews, etc.)? State whether conditions will be manipulated or naturally observed design (see “Conditions and Design” Table 3.1, page 80 of the APA Publication manual).   + Sampling procedure(s) – Describe the sampling method, participation compensation, and settings where data will be collected.   + Data collection – Describe the method(s) to be used for data collection.   **Analytic Plan –** Describe the steps to be used for preparing and analyzing data (write in future tense).   * Preparing data – How will variables be coded and calculated? What decision criteria will be used for eliminating participant data? * Analyzing data – Which statistical analyses will be used for each hypothesis and why? What will the alpha level be for decision-making for statistical significance?   **Discussion** – Describe the expected results, limitations, and implications of the study (write in future tense).   * Expected results – For each hypothesis, what is the expected outcome based on empirical evidence. * Limitations – Identify potential limitations based on methodology and potential confounds and threats to external validity. * Implications – What do the potential findings contribute to the larger body of science (e.g., what theories are supported or challenged)? What benefit would this have to society and/or individuals? What is the next step in research?   **References** – Provide references for all sources cited in the proposal narrative with proper APA formatting (see APA Publication Manual Chapters 9 and 10). The references do not count against the page limit. Only citations that appear in the paper’s body should be listed on the reference page. Likewise, every entry on your reference section must have been cited in your paper’s body.   * References start on a separate page with the heading “**References**” centered and bold. * Sources are alphabetized and formatted using a hanging indent. * A minimum of five peer-reviewed, primary sources. * Each reference entry includes four elements (properly formatted): author, date, title, and source. * List authors in the same order they appear on the original source. |
| **Overall APA style reminders**   * Mastery of grammar and spelling. * Seek precise word choice. Work on clear and concise sentences, paragraphs, or sections. Avoid wordiness. * Use 1-inch margins all around. * If you add a table, be sure to number, caption, and format the table correctly (see APA Publication Manual Chapter 7). Only one table is permitted. * If you add a figure (e.g., a data summary graph), be sure it is appropriately numbered, captioned, and labeled (see the APA Publication Manual Chapter 7). Only one figure is permitted. |