

THE UNIVERSITY OF WAIKATO



GENERAL GUIDE
FOR
PSYCHOLOGY STUDENTS

*Preparation of assignments,
policy matters and study techniques*

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GENERAL GUIDE FOR PSYCHOLOGY STUDENTS

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Preface

This booklet is intended to provide students with a guide for the preparation of assignments for Psychology courses. It covers writing essays and research reports, Departmental policies relevant to written assignments, and techniques for studying.

Much of the formatting information contained in this guide applies to other social science subjects in addition to Psychology. However, some of the recommendations, such as the system of using references, are specific to Psychology. Other subjects may recommend that essays or reports be set out in a format that differs in some aspects from the details given in this guide. Within Psychology, there is some variation in preferred writing and formatting styles among different areas of psychology and among different staff members. If in doubt, seek clarification from the course coordinator for whom you are preparing an assignment.

Section 1: PSYCHOLOGY ASSIGNMENTS

General information

The general information section sets out details relevant to the presentation of Psychology assignments, use of word processing and printers, and general formatting details.

Presentation

Essays and reports which are neatly presented enhance the likelihood of getting a good grade - providing the content is of good quality as well - because neatly presented assignments are easier to read and understand. Typewritten assignments or those produced by using word-processing software on a computer are best. Word processing on a computer takes less time and effort than hand writing for those familiar with word-processing software. Many students now use word processors in their university work and word processing skills are becoming an increasingly important part of education.

If you can afford it, a personal computer with word processing software (Apple MacIntosh and MS-DOS/Windows systems are the most common types), and a reasonable quality printer are a good investment. You do not necessarily need a highly sophisticated word-processor. Most common ones will do the job well enough. Information and Technology Services (ITS) runs training seminars on the use of common word-processing packages at regular intervals. Enquire at the ITS Reception Area (Ground Floor of Building G). There is a general purpose PC computer laboratory in JB.03, a MacLab in JB.01 and a small PC/MacLab in JB.02, which are available to all students. Enquiries should be directed to Student Consultants in JB.09A or KG.04 concerning the PC laboratory and the MacLab. Students have 24 hour access to these labs. Access to the Psychology Department computer laboratories is limited, and enquiries should be directed to the Department's computer consultant in J1.16.

Printing

Printing is available through the University computer laboratories to those with a computer account. A deposit to put your print account in credit is first required. Quality printing can be purchased by students from the University Secretarial Services.

Formatting details for assignments.

1. It is essential for identification purposes that you put the following information on the front cover:
 - (a) The course number and title (*check you get the course number right!*)
 - (b) the title of the assignment or report
 - (c) your name
 - (d) the lecturer's or tutor's name (if required)
 - (e) your tutorial or practical group number/time and day (if required)
 - (f) due date for submission
2. Use A4 paper for both essays and reports.
3. If you are handwriting, write on one side of the paper only. This may seem wasteful but ballpoint pens, printers and typewriters tend to "press through" on the reverse side of the paper and if this is written on as well it makes reading difficult.
4. Make sure the pages are numbered. Numbers normally start after the cover page (e.g., the introduction or abstract or table of contents is normally numbered as page 2). Page numbers should be at the top of the page, either centred or above the right hand margin.
5. Use 1.5 or double spacing for assignments produced on a typewriter or word processor. If using a word-processor it is best not to right-justify text (i.e. it should not have the right margin straight up and down).
6. Leave at least 4cm. for left margins and 2cm. for top, bottom and right margins. The larger left margin is for marker's feedback. If you do not leave this space, you may not receive marker feedback.
7. Make sure paragraphs are clearly marked. Indent the first line of each paragraph by 5 spaces and/or leave a blank line between each paragraph.
8. Do not start a sentence with a numeral (e.g., use "Two" not "2")
9. Staple all the pages of your essay or report together. Paperclips, pins, or just mere folding of the corners are NOT sufficient, and lecturers cannot be held responsible for the loss of parts of your work if you do not bind your assignment adequately.

Handwriting. If you are handwriting your assignments, you are asked to adhere to the following requirements.

1. Use lined paper when hand-writing.

2. Rule a 4cm. margin from the left-hand edge of the page. This enables the marker to write comments in the margin.
3. Use blue or black inks. Don't use green or red inks, as they are often difficult to read.
4. Make sure your writing is easily readable. Essays which are illegible may be handed back for rewriting or given a fail grade. Illegible sections or words often lose marks no matter how good the content is.

Handing in assignments. For Psychology undergraduate courses, assignments should normally be handed in and collected at the **Waikato Arts and Social Sciences Information Centre (Information Centre)** located in the reception area on the ground floor of J Block. For graduate assignments, check with the course coordinator where they should be handed in. Assignments sometimes go missing, so you must keep a copy of each assignment you hand in. This can be a photocopy or a document/file on a computer disk.

1. Cover page; include course number and course title, title of assignment, student's name, lecturer's or tutor's name, due date for submission.
2. Number all pages after cover.
3. Use 1.5 or double spacing for typed assignments.
4. If hand writing, write on one side of paper only, and make sure writing is legible.
5. Leave at least 4cm left margins; 2cm for top, bottom and right margins.
6. Staple or securely fasten pages of assignment.
7. Keep a copy of the assignment

Stylistic information

Spelling. Use New Zealand spelling (which is the same as British spelling), for words like "behaviour." Use North American spelling, (e.g., behavior) when that spelling occurs in a American journal or book title (e.g., *The behavior of organisms*) or in a direct quotation from an American source. Use a British (e.g., Oxford) dictionary as your guide. Note that some computer spelling check programs are based on North American spelling.

Use of Maori words. Plurals: When using words from a language other than English, the general rule is to retain the plural form used in the language of origin. Also, some English words do not add an "s" for the plural form.

For this reason, it is more correct **not to add an "s"** to form the plural of Maori words

e.g.	singular	correct plural	incorrect plural
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Abstract

The abstract should be placed immediately after the cover page and have the title *Abstract* centred at the top of the page. It is also permissible to label this section as *Summary*. It should be about 100-150 words in length and cover;

- * the topic or theme of the investigation
- * summary details of the methods used or information gathered
- * the main findings
- * any important conclusions or implications

The abstract enables the reader to determine the nature of the research and its main findings. Use the active voice, and report events that have happened using the past tense. Do not put anything in the abstract unless it is also in the main part of the report. If you find it difficult to decide what should go in an abstract, look at abstracts of psychology journal articles to get ideas.

Introduction

State the general purposes for carrying out the research. Outline the specific topic or issues that you will be covering in your assignment. Describe any previous research which is relevant to the topic, citing literature sources in the appropriate format (author, date). It is expected that the Introduction of a research report will review any previous research which has been carried out on the same or similar topics. If you omit any major studies or literature reviews on the topic, or do not cite references to support points which you make, this will be seen as a major weakness in the report. If there is a great deal of literature on the topic, refer the reader to journal literature reviews or well-known books on the topic and summarize the main findings from previous research relevant to your report.

Note: Manuscripts submitted to journals for publication usually centre the title of the report at the top of the first page of text after the abstract. However most lecturers prefer the main heading *Introduction* to be centred at the top of the first page of text in student reports so it is clear where the main text begins.

Method

The method section tells the reader how the research was carried out. Ideally it should contain sufficient information to enable a reader to repeat the research in another location.

The following sub-headings may be used. Not all of them may be relevant for specific reports. Leave out sub-headings which are not relevant. Much psychological research (a) is not carried out in laboratories, (b) does not involve an experiment ("experimental" research is that which uses *experimental* and *control* groups), (c) does not use "subjects," and (d) does not use equipment, materials or "apparatus." For these reasons, do not use terms which are inappropriate for your particular research report. Check with the course coordinator to clarify appropriate terminology.

Participants, respondents or subjects. Who were the people involved in the research? How many? How were they selected, recruited or contacted? What were their main characteristics which were relevant to the research outcomes or interpretations of the research? (e.g., age, sex, occupational status, ethnicity, cultural background). If animals were used, what was their species, age and sex, and how were they housed and cared for?

Apparatus or materials. What apparatus did you use? Psychological tests, observations in laboratories, observations in everyday settings, structured or open-ended interviews, and questionnaires are some examples of commonly-used means of data collection. Any special equipment or apparatus used should be described. If scales or questionnaires were used, what were they and what was their origin? Did you devise them especially for this study, or were they standard measures which are readily available? If scales were used, what evidence of reliability was obtained? If an interview schedule was employed, how structured was it, and how were its questions devised? Where you have used a questionnaire, interview schedule, observation sheet or set of instructions, it may be appropriate to include them in an appendix (see below, p. 20). Both apparatus and materials should be described in sufficient detail to allow ready replication of your study by the reader.

Data collection procedures. What were the procedures used for collecting the research data? Briefings or instructions given to participants should be noted. For research outside the university, the settings in which the data were collected should be described. Again, procedure should be reported in detail sufficient to allow replication by a reader.

Comment should also be made about the trustworthiness (e.g., validity estimates) and reliability (e.g., stability across different data collection settings or times) of the main data sources. If ethnicity is reported (e.g., Maori and Pakeha) the investigator must describe how ethnicity was determined (e.g., self-report) and the options presented to research participants (e.g., Maori, both Maori and Pakeha, Pakeha, Other).

Ethical statement. Outline any ethical considerations relevant to your research and describe how you dealt with these considerations. You may also include a brief description of your personal involvement in the research and comment on whether (and how) that may have affected your data or its interpretation.

Data analysis. Describe any specific information about how data were coded and analyzed that is not immediately apparent from the presentation of results. Do not include formulae and calculation details for the statistical tests in your report - unless you are asked to include this information.

Results

Describe the results obtained. If tables or figures (eg., graphs) are used, you must refer to the table in the text *before* the table or figure is presented and summarize the main results from each graph or table in the text. Describe major trends evident in the results, and any results which seem unusual, surprising or noteworthy. Provide a brief summary of the key features of the results. If any expectations or hypotheses were outlined in the Introduction, make it clear whether your results support them or not. However leave explanations and implications for the

Discussion, unless your research is qualitative in which case you may combine the Results and Discussion sections.

Tables. Tables are an efficient means of presenting a large amount of data as clearly as possible. However they do disrupt reading, and should be used only when they are needed. An example of a standard table appears on page 11 as Table X. Like all the tables and figures included here, it is taken directly from the *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association, 4th ed* (1994), available from the University Library.

Some important points are:

- the table is numbered, and has an underlined title above it;
- only horizontal lines are used, and then sparingly: a minimum is one line at the top, one under the heading, and one at the foot of the table;
- information useful in interpreting the table is included in footnotes.

Examples of other types of table which are commonly used have also been taken from the *APA Manual* and are given below. They include a correlation matrix (p 12), an ANOVA results table (p 13) and a table containing words rather than numbers (p 14).

Figures. A figure allows the reader to gain a quick picture of the overall pattern of results. They are usually not as precise as a table, requiring the reader to estimate values. A figure may be a chart, graph, photograph, drawing or diagram. A key question to ask yourself before drawing a figure is: What sort of pattern or relationship do I want to show? If it simply duplicates text or a table, it is not necessary. If it summarises or assists in understanding, then it could well be a useful complement to your report.

Graphs are the most common form of figure used in reports. There are several different types of graph, but examples of the most frequently used in psychological reports, together with some key requirements, are shown below. They include the line graph (p 15), the bar graph (p 16) and the scatter graph (p 17). These are also taken from the *APA Manual*. Note that their numbers and titles are beneath them. Drawings, particularly diagrams, can often be useful also, especially to describe the setting in which an experiment was run. An example of one is included on p 18.

Remember that just presenting a table or a figure is not sufficient by itself. It must be referred to in the text, and a brief summary provided of the main points it shows.

Example of a basic table:

(from the APA Publication Manual, 4th ed., 1994, p. 124)

Example of a table presenting a correlation matrix:

(from the APA Publication Manual, 4th ed., 1994, p. 125)

Example of an ANOVA table :

(from the APA Publication Manual, 4th ed., 1994, p. 131)

Example of a table presenting verbal rather than numerical data:

(from the APA Publication Manual, 4th ed., 1994, p. 135)

Example of a line graph:

(from the APA Publication Manual, 4th ed., 1994, p. 144)

Example of a bar graph:

(from the APA Publication Manual, 4th ed., 1994, p. 145)

Example of a scatter graph:

(from the APA Publication Manual, 4th ed., 1994, p. 146)

Example of a diagrammatic line drawing:

(from the APA Publication Manual, 4th ed., 1994, p. 148)

Discussion

The discussion section considers the implications of the results. It does not repeat results already reported in the results section or include further analysis of the results.

Discuss any limitations or qualifications which need to be made about the results. Is further information needed? If so, what kind of information? Discuss any implications which could be taken from the results of the present study.

In some instances, especially with qualitative research, it is appropriate to combine the results and discussion into one section. For example, in interview research, discussing data as you present them avoids repetition of quotes. Check with the course coordinator about which approach is most suitable.

The following questions can be considered when writing the discussion section.

1. What was the main aim of the research?
2. Was the aim achieved?
3. What is the evidence that it was achieved (or not achieved)?
4. What other findings do you consider important? Why?
5. How do the findings of your research compare to those of others?
6. What implications do the findings have for the theory or perspectives presented in the Introduction?
7. What were the major shortcomings or limitations?
8. How might the shortcomings be avoided in future research?
9. What further research might be worth pursuing in this field now?
10. What are the psychological, social, personal and real-life implications of the findings of your research?

References

Statements about previous research findings, quotations and references cited in the text must be acknowledged using the correct referencing format. Every reference cited in the text must appear in the reference list at the end of the report. Material which has been collected, but not cited in the report should not be included in the reference list.

The reference list is attached to the end of a report. Authors should be listed in alphabetical order. See the section on *Use of citations and references in essays and reports* below for detailed

examples showing the correct referencing format, or check the American Psychological Association *Publication Manual* (on desk copy in the University Library).

Appendices

Appendices are rarely used in journal articles. However, when writing a report as an assignment, questionnaires and tests, sets of instructions, tables of raw data, and statistical calculations, may be included as numbered appendices. Some staff do not like assignments to have appendices attached. Check with your course coordinator about specific course requirements.

If you use appendices, each appendix should be referred to in the text. Use one of the following styles:

Participants were asked 15 questions about their close relationships (see Appendix 1 for details).

or

The questionnaire used for the research is shown in Appendix 3.

Recommended reading

Findley, B. (1993). *How to write a psychology laboratory report*. Sydney: Prentice-Hall

O'Shea, R. P. (1993). *Writing for Psychology: An introductory guide for psychology students*. Sydney: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

Rosnow, R. L. & Rosnow, M. (1992). *Writing papers in Psychology* (2nd ed.). Belmont, California: Wadsworth.

Rountree, K. (1991). *Writing for success: A practical guide for New Zealand students*. Auckland: Longman Paul.

Use of citations and references in essays and reports

"Citations" refer to the citing of a literature source (author's name and date of publication) in the text of a report. "References" are the literature sources provided in a list at the end of a report. The following citation and reference system, which is similar to that used in most psychology journals, should be used when writing essays and reports for the Psychology Department. This system has been developed so that source materials can be located by readers of essays and reports. It differs from reference systems used in some education and sociology journals. Footnotes are not used in this referencing system. If a point is worth making, it should be included in the text; otherwise it can be left out.

Students who wish to get further details should consult the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (4th ed.) which is held in the University Library, or peruse recent copies of journals such as the *New Zealand Journal of Psychology*, *American Psychologist*, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *Psychological Bulletin*, *Journal of Abnormal*

Psychology, Journal of Community Psychology, Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis or the Journal of Humanistic Psychology.

1. *When to use citations*

Citations are used to support comments or statements made in reports or essays, and when a review of previous research is being done. Citation of existing publications serves to acknowledge the work of other people and to provide access to that work for readers.

When writing about an area in which research evidence is available, students should endeavour to refer to (to "cite") at least some of the published literature to show that they are aware of this literature. Any points which are controversial, novel, or stated to have wide generality should be supported by references wherever possible. If you make comments unsupported by citations, or where the available literature or evidence does not support your comments, you leave yourself open to criticism concerning inadequate knowledge of relevant research. Sometimes, of course, there is little or no previous research in a particular area (that you have been able to find). In this case your discussion should make it clear that theories and possibilities, not specific evidence, are all that are available to support your comments. Each key point of your presentation should be supported, whether by evidence, logical argument, or an authority. It will help to establish your point if you are able to provide a strong, well reasoned basis for it.

2. *Citing literature in the text*

Any essay or research report must acknowledge previous research carried out on the topic. There are several ways of referring to literature. You may refer to a specific study:

Aronson (1975) found that.....

or

It has been found that cooperative learning leads to higher achievement than competitive learning (Aronson, 1975).

Where a point is supported by several studies, these should be placed in brackets at the end of the relevant sentence, in alphabetical order of authors, and order of year of publication for the same author, thus:

It has been found that cooperative learning leads to higher achievement than competitive learning (Aronson, 1975; Johnson & Johnson, 1975, 1976; Lucker et al., 1976).

Where there are three, four, or five authors, list all of the authors the first time the reference is cited in the text. Subsequent citations of the same reference in the text use only the first author's name, followed by "et al." (meaning "and others"). Where there are six or more authors, use only the first author's name followed by et al. (not underlined, no stop after "et", stop after "al.").

Where two authors are referred to in brackets, the ampersand "&" is used instead of "and."
(Johnson & Johnson, 1975).

If the names of the two authors are not enclosed in brackets, "and" is used.

Johnson and Johnson (1975) found that....

If the same author or authors have more than one reference published in the same year, the letters a, b, c are added to the date to distinguish these references. The letters must also be added to these references in the reference list at the end of the report.

(Johnson, 1975a, 1975b)

Where literature is cited that has not been read directly, but is reported in later literature, then the later (secondary) reference is included in the reference list, not the original or earlier reference. In such cases use the following form, in which no date is given for the original source;

Johnson's study (cited in Beatty, 1975) found that

and then include Beatty's article in the reference list.

3. *Different authors with the same name*

Normally only the author's surname is used in citations, without initials or titles. An exception to this practice occurs when two different authors have the same name and have published different (not joint) articles in the same year.

T. Harris (1975) reported that....

In contrast, another study found that.... (M. Harris, 1975)

Co-authors with the same name do not have their initials listed.

Johnson and Johnson (1975) reported that....

Some feminist and other psychologists also use the authors' first names in citations, partly in recognition of the person's whole identity, but also because, without first names, some readers may assume that the writer is male. If this method is used, it should be used consistently with all authors, irrespective of gender.

4. *Quotations*

Quotations are sections of text taken directly from another document. They should be used sparingly. Essays and reports should be primarily be in the writer's own words, not an extensive collection of quotes. We are more interested in your understanding of what you have read than in the actual words used by another author. *All quotations must carry a reference to the author(s), the year of publication and the number of the page(s) on which the quotation appeared in the source.*

Direct quotations from published works are of two forms. Text quotations are those where the quotation is incorporated as part of the sentence and is distinguished by double quotation marks.

Block quotations, where the quotation is set apart from the sentence by indenting the whole quote five spaces from the left-hand margin, and no quotation marks are used.

In general, block quotations are for more lengthy segments (more than 40 words) than text quotations incorporated in the text, and should be used where an author has defined a particular aspect, or has expressed a point particularly cogently and well. Block quotations are also appropriate for clustering several quotes, from the same source or different sources, together to illustrate a point.

The following examples illustrate the different quotation styles:

Skinner (1957) stated that a place is "familiar only to someone who has seen it" (p. 136).

or

He stated that a place "becomes familiar when frequently seen" (Skinner, 1957, p. 136).

or

Skinner (1957) stated that a

familiar place is not anything distinguished by any physical property. It is familiar only to someone who has seen it or something like it before. Any place becomes familiar when frequently seen. (p. 136).

or

Several of the children interviewed expressed feelings of optimism, for different reasons:

...because we have lots of countries helping us. (Heidi, 10)

The superpowers are human too! (Carl, 14)

God will protect us. (Jason, 11)

5. *Personal communications*

Where information is obtained orally, or from letters or memos, the source can be cited in the text as a personal communication in the following style:

Jane Stalworthy (personal communication, April 1, 1994)

Put the month and year only (e.g., April, 1994), if the specific date is not known.

Personal communications are **not included** in the reference list.

6. *The reference list*

A list headed "References" is put at the end of the report or essay. It should contain all of the authors referred to in the text (and *only* those authors) in alphabetical order of the first author's name. *The reference list is not a bibliography and should not be referred to as such.* A number of examples are set below to illustrate how different types of references are set out.

Books

Author, initials (year of publication). Title (underlined or italicized, only first word and proper names are capitalized). Place of publication, publisher. Second and subsequent lines of each entry are indented. (The APA Publication Manual recommends three spaces for reference indenting. Some word processors have a standard setting - e.g., one centimetre. Both are acceptable, but do not indent more than 6 spaces or one centimetre.

Johnson, D.W., & Johnson, R.T. (1975). *Learning together and alone: Cooperation, competition and individualization*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall.

Book chapters

Chapter author, chapter title, book editors, book title (followed by first and last page numbers of the chapter in brackets). Place of publication, publisher. Note that the book editor(s) are listed by initials first, then surname.

Walker, R.J. (1973). Biculturalism and education. In D. Bray and C. Hill (Eds.), *Polynesian and Pakeha in New Zealand education* (Vol. 1, pp. 31-64). Auckland: Heinemann.

Journal articles

Author, initials, year of publication, title of article (only first word and proper names are capitalized), Name of Journal (underlined/italicized and capitalized), Volume number (underlined/italicized), page numbers of first and last pages.

Lucker, G., Rosenfeld, D., Sikes, J., & Aronson, E. (1976). Performance in the interdependent classroom: A field study. *American Educational Research Journal*, 13, 115-123.

If (and only if) the journal starts each issue within a single volume from page 1, then the issue number is given in brackets after the volume number (see example below). Very few social science journals do this, so usually the issue number is not mentioned.

Becker, L.J., & Seligman, C. (1981). Welcome to the energy crisis. *Journal of Social Issues*, 37(2), 1-7.

Magazine article

If a magazine article is used, then the month (and day if a newspaper) of publication is included in the date and the page numbers prefaced by pp.

Aronson, E. (1975, August). Busing and racial tension: The jigsaw route to learning and liking. *Psychology Today*, pp. 43-50.

Newspaper article, no author

List the headline in place of the author, and put all the date details in brackets, as shown in the example below.

Police chief happy with gun law. (1991, December 2). *New Zealand Herald*, p. 1.

Examples of a number of different types of references are given in the following list, which should be used as a guide for setting out references. Particular note should be made of the correct form of punctuation used in these examples. Where the same author's name appears for several references, it is repeated each time - dashes or dittos are not used.

Example of a reference list:

References

Cole, M., Gay, J., Glick, J., & Sharp, D.W. (1971). *The cultural context of learning and thinking*. New York: Basic Books.

Graves, N. B., & Graves, T. D. (1975). *The impact of modernization on the personality of a Polynesian people*. (Research Report No.7). Auckland: South Pacific Research Institute.

Graves, T. D., & Graves N. B. (1977, August). *Altruism in Aitutaki: Development of rivalry in a cooperative society*. Paper presented at the American Psychological Association Annual Meeting, San Francisco.

Johnson, D. W. (1975a). Cooperatives and social perspective taking. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 31, 241-244.

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Tips for writing essays

Getting started

The following suggestions are relevant to preparation for writing essays.

1. Read and carefully understand the question. Do not begin writing until the question has been analyzed and its point grasped. If you are unable to make sense of the question, ask the lecturer or tutor about it. Lecturers prefer to spend some time clarifying what is required than receive poorly written assignments. Some class time should be allocated to give information, and answer students' questions about course assignments. Remind your lecturer if he/she forgets to do this.

2. Read constructively and critically. You should not accept everything that has been published as being accurate and informative. From time to time refer back to the question to ensure your reading is in areas that are directly relevant.
3. Don't begin writing the essay as soon as you have enough material. Stop and work out your response to the question. Think about your reading of the situation and make some decisions about what your approach will be.
4. Plan your essay by listing headings and sub-headings so that when you write you are able to cover the topic in a systematic way. Sort your ideas and reference sources into the sections corresponding to the headings.
5. Write from your plan. Try to write the first draft at one sitting as this will produce greater fluency and continuity. Keep to a straightforward, simple style. Rely on your own words and do not expect to write well until your own ideas are clear to you. It usually makes the structure of an essay clearer if the text is divided into sections, using headings and sub-headings.
6. Be tolerant of your difficulties when writing. Do not expect it to be a simple job and do not resent time taken in redrafting difficult passages or sentences. Work at it until it is clear to another person reading the draft.
7. After at least a 24 hour break (or a week later if you have the time), look at the first draft again and ask yourself whether it really presents an answer to the question you were asked. At the same time, correct any faults of expression. If possible, ask a friend to read through it and comment on any sections that are unclear.
8. Finally, proof-read for spelling, punctuation, accuracy of referencing and legibility. Remember that proof-reading is a demanding task. It is easy to "read" what you intended to write rather than what is actually on the paper. Having someone else proof-read your work is a good idea. If you are using a word processor, use spell check.

Common problems

Some of the more common problems encountered in essay writing and some suggestions for overcoming these are as follows:

1. Failure to read or understand the question itself. University questions are more often testing, more subtle, more "controversially" worded than school questions. Students frequently treat the question in a simple-minded way, paying no heed to its specific requirements. Work which is superficial, though often factually correct, sometimes results in little relevance to the question asked, and may be given a very low grade.
2. Failure to ask constructive, searching questions about the question, to take decisions about the scope of the work to be done, or to set boundaries on the scope of your essay. A long essay does not in any way guarantee a good grade!

3. Failure to plan the preliminary reading systematically. Reading without discrimination or too uncritically results in amassing material haphazardly, and not knowing what to do with it all.
4. Failure to think about the material gathered. Failure to 'stand back' and decide what the argument or approach will be, in the light of the question asked and the material researched. Avoid a tendency to repeat material from readings in an unselective way. Use independent and reasoned argument to integrate the material you have read.
5. Failure to plan the writing once some decisions have been taken about the argument, the main areas to be covered, and the evidence available. This results in a badly constructed essay which requires the reader to spend an unreasonable amount of time working out the good points and reassembling them in some logical order.
6. Failure to write clearly and concisely. This sometimes arises more from an inappropriate writing style than from grammatically poor English. The most beautifully written English does not excuse verbosity, repetition or irrelevance.
7. A reasonable standard of English is necessary. Do not write in note form. Complete sentences are much easier to understand. Avoid long sentences and those whose meaning is unclear or ambiguous. Words like "this," "they," and similar indefinite terms at the start of a sentence are often ambiguous, and are to be avoided.
8. Poor checking and proof-reading.
9. Not adequately referencing specific claims in the text.
10. Not ensuring that all the references cited in the text are listed in the reference list at the end of the report or essay (and vice versa).
11. Plagiarism. Taking ideas, statements, or paragraphs from another book or article, or another student's assignment, without acknowledgement. Refer to page 32 for the Department's policy and procedures concerning plagiarism.

Due dates for assignments

Extensions for due dates of assignments

If you think you will not be able to complete an essay or report on time, and have a good reason for being late, ask at the Psychology Secretaries' Offices for an extension form which allows you to apply for a deferment. The extension form must be presented to the lecturer concerned *before* the deadline - except in cases of sudden illness. You will usually find staff are sympathetic to genuine need, but rather unsympathetic to last-minute requests for extensions. If your reason for seeking an extension or complete exemption from some piece of work is a medical one, the extension form should have a medical certificate attached.

Penalties for lateness

Any penalties for lateness are stipulated in the relevant paper outlines

Section 2: POLICY MATTERS

Gender-neutral Language

The Psychology Department follows the policy of the New Zealand Psychological Society in supporting the use of gender-neutral and non-sexist language in all written work in teaching and research. Students who use inappropriately gendered or sexist language in assignments may expect to have it corrected as part of the normal marking procedure. The following guidelines are to be followed in the preparation of written assignments. (These guidelines were adapted from; Guidelines for Nonsexist use of language, *American Psychologist*, 1975, 30, 682-684.)

Stylistic guidelines for gender-neutral language

The purpose of these stylistic guidelines is to overcome the impression embedded in some uses of the English language that (a) people in general are male, and (b) certain social roles are automatically gender-linked. Another purpose is to ensure that psychological writing is accurate and does not convey information that is misleading or is written from a sexist perspective that degrades people.

Use of personal pronouns (e.g., he, she). The author should use appropriate pronouns when referring to the sex of a person or persons.

Wrong: The individual's freedom to bear children should not be defined by his education, income, or ethnicity.

Right: The individual's freedom to bear children should not be defined by her education, income, or ethnicity.

When gender of the person being referred to is not known, the author should avoid using a personal pronoun. The following alternatives are recommended:

- (a) use of the plural;
e.g., they
- (b) use of one of the following;
he or she, she or he, she/he, s/he
- (c) use of gender neutral words such as person, one, human.

Wrong: The school teacher is influential in personality development. She should be conscious of this.

Right: Teachers are influential in personality development. They should be conscious of this.

Wrong: The psychologist has to finish graduate study before he uses his title.

Right: The psychologist has to finish graduate study before she or he uses the title.

Or: Psychologists have to finish graduate study before they use the title.

Use of generic terms to indicate people in general. The author should avoid use of terms *man* or *mankind* and instead use *human*, *human being*, *humankind*, *people*, *persons*, or the like.

Wrong: Man is a cognitive being.

Right: People are cognitive beings.

Use of salacious, or other questionable sex-linked phrases. Such phrases should not be considered cute or catchy. Avoid using them.

Wrong: Voluptuous belle

Right: Woman.

Use of irrelevant demographic information. Characteristics such as marital status, physical appearance, age, race, and the like should be omitted when irrelevant.

Wrong: I should like to thank my secretary, Mrs Jones.

Right: I should like to thank my secretary, Sally Jones (or Ms Jones or S. Jones).

Use of parallel construction. Authors should maintain parallel construction with sex-linked (as well as other) terms.

Wrong: The men and girls at X University.

Right: The men and women at X University.

Use of inaccurate terms. The use of stereotypes in technical writing should be avoided.

Wrong: The boy chose typically male toys.

Right: The boy chose (specify the toys the boy used).

Wrong: The chairman opened the meeting.

Right: The chairperson opened the meeting.

Use of the terms "gender" and "sex". "Sex is biologically determined; "gender" is the product of social construction.

Writing research reports in gender-neutral language

A major purpose in using gender-neutral language is to avoid errors and to improve the accuracy of information presented in research and other types of psychological reports.

Avoiding unjustifiable generalisations across sexes. Authors should avoid generalising from the behaviour of one sex to that of the other. Specifically, when research participants are all of one sex, generalisations should not be made to people in general. It is the responsibility of authors to state the sex of any participants or comparison group cited in their report. If the sex of participants or comparison groups cannot be determined from a research report, you should note the omission and discuss its implications.

Inclusion of available evidence on gender differences. When research results yield any sex differences, those differences should be reported.

Inclusion of sex of research participants and researchers. You should report the sex of all participants in the research and the gender of the researchers and their assistants when their sex may have an influence on participants' responses.

Interpretation of gender differences. The author of a research report should consider all reasonable interpretations of reported gender differences, including the possibility of biases in methodology.

Kaupapa Maori

It is the policy of the Psychology Department to encourage and support the development of Kaupapa Maori. The Department welcomes and encourages students to include in their work ideas, perspectives and concepts which reflect the experience of being Maori, wherever considered applicable.

Students who incorporate Maori ideas, perspectives and concepts in their work can expect to have their work assessed by staff or tutors who are familiar with such themes and competent to assess such assignments. If students feel that an assignment incorporating Maori themes has not been adequately assessed, they may request that the assignment be assessed by staff who are competent to assess Maori themes.

Assignments written in Maori

The University has established an initial policy for assignments written in Maori. The following quotation is from the University policy document.

Maori is an official language of New Zealand and the University of Waikato has an increasing number of students who are bilingual or who are studying to become so.

The University is increasing the opportunities for students to present assignments written in Maori and currently teaches a number of courses using Maori as the medium of instruction and assessment. The majority of such courses are taught within the Maori Department - School of Humanities and the Maori Department - Kura Toi Tangata (School of Education).

Policies with respect to assignments written in Maori vary, and depend on the nature of the course concerned, the availability of staff in the subject who are competent in Maori language and, very importantly, the formal assessment requirements and processes which apply in that subject.

A student interested in presenting an assignment written in Maori should first discuss the matter with the teaching staff who are responsible for marking the assignment. Subject to their support, the student should seek the formal approval of the Dean of the School of Studies responsible for the administration of the subject concerned. The final approval together with the monitoring of policies in this regard are the responsibility of the Dean (Policy document dated 8 October 1991)

The School of Social Sciences and the Psychology Department are developing ways in which the University policy can be implemented so it will be satisfactory for both staff and students. Initially this may be done by allowing students in particular Psychology courses to submit specified assignments in Maori. Psychology students wishing to present assignments written in Maori should discuss this initially with the course coordinator.

Maori-Pakeha comparisons in psychological research

If students are reporting research involving comparisons between Maori and Pakeha ethnic groups, the following points should be covered in research reports:

- (a) how ethnicity was determined (see section on *Research Reports - Method: Data collection procedures*, p. 9);
- (b) make clear which of the three distinct characteristics; ethnicity, culture or physical appearance ("race"), were being investigated;
- (c) describe the process of obtaining approval for the research and the procedures for reporting the research findings to participants if the research was carried out in a Maori community.

Internal Assessment and plagiarism

Many courses in Psychology are examined by internal assessment procedures. These involve students submitting work during the course (for example, laboratory reports, project reports, essays, and short tests) and having them marked and returned, thereby receiving feedback on the progress of their work throughout the course. Some courses will also have formal tests at the end of the academic session.

Students should not present work taken from the assignments of other students as their own. The following points should be noted:

- (1) In the case where two identical pieces of work are submitted, both students will be penalised.

- (2) Where students have collaborated on laboratory or research work, the final report write-up must be the work of each student written up independently. The only departure from this practice will be in exceptions which have been discussed and agreed with the lecturer concerned.
- (3) When using existing literature, care must be taken to ensure that all quotations, or other information taken from another source, are acknowledged. Unacknowledged quotation from a published work, even with a few words changed, will be regarded as plagiarism.
- (4) Overlap between different courses. Although reading and reference material used in two different courses may be related, students are expected to hand in separate assignments for each course. Similarity of literature does not mean that course objectives are identical.

In the course of their studies students often do work cooperatively and collaborate on research and other activities. In no way do Psychology staff wish to discourage this; indeed we recognise the necessity of it and support it. But assessment is a personal matter and for it to make sense at all, it must be a measure of the individual's effort and activity.

The University regards any dishonest practice with regard to course work very seriously and has dealt severely with students who became involved in such activities.

Ethical review of proposed research

The Psychology Department requires that all research carried out by Psychology students or staff, or which is supervised by Psychology staff and which involves research contact with people or animals, must be submitted for ethical review. The Department uses the *Code of Ethics* of the New Zealand Psychological Society as a guide for conducting reviews of proposed research.

The ethical review is carried out by completing an ethical review form (available from the Psychology Office) and submitting the completed form to the Convenor of the Psychology Research and Ethics Committee via the Psychology Department Secretary. Normally all class research exercises which have been initiated by staff for teaching purposes will have had an ethical review carried out by the supervising staff member. Students carrying out research for directed studies, dissertations, theses or other independent study within a course should ensure that an ethical review is completed before commencing any data collection.

Section 3: STUDY TECHNIQUES¹

¹Parts of this section are derived from C. Morgan & R. King (1966), *Introduction to Psychology* (3rd ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill (pp. 147-149).

Probably the two most important things that students can do to improve their university work are to develop strong motivation for study and a well organized routine. Here are some specific methods a student can use when studying. Their value will depend on the individual - different techniques are suited to different students - and on the particular subject being studied. There are, however, some good general rules that are usually advantageous to follow.

Textbook study

A useful guide can be found in the *Survey Q3R Method*. This grew out of an elaborate programme at the Ohio State University which analyzed students' academic problems. The Method consists of five specific steps which are labelled *Survey, Questions, Read, Recite and Review* - hence, the name Survey Q3R Method.

Survey. When authors write text books, they go to some pains to organize their material under various headings so that the headings tell readers what to expect to find in each section. If you leaf through any text for example, you will find scarcely a page without a heading. Many students, however, ignore headings and try to read textbooks in the same way they read novels. When they do that, they ignore much of the structure prepared by the author to assist readers. Use the headings. They show the author's organization, they indicate how the material is put together, and they make clear how topics are inter-related. Most important, they make the main subject of each section clear. When you finish reading a section, you should have found a few key points that are relevant to the heading. Students should also note the value of using headings for their own writing. Most textbooks use two or three levels of headings.

When you first pick up a textbook it is a good idea to read the preface or foreword to find out the intentions of the author and browse through the headings of the various chapters to survey the book in general. In starting on a chapter, begin by surveying the various headings of sections within the chapter. In this way, you learn generally what the chapter is about and know what to expect.

Questions. Some textbooks contain lists of review questions at the end of each chapter. These questions are often neglected, for students do not realize their value in studying. If a book has them, read them and try to answer them. It is also valuable to ask your own questions. Try to turn the headings of sections into questions, and read the sections with the idea of finding the answers to your questions.

Questions have several benefits. They maintain interest in what is being read. They help the reader to participate actively in the learning process. Research indicates that active participation is a great aid in learning. Finally, questions are ways of testing yourself to see what you have learned. If you test yourself before a course test, you will do much better when faced with a formal examination.

Read. The next step, of course, is to read - and to read carefully. Read to answer the questions you have asked yourself. Do not read passively, as you would read a novel, but continually challenge yourself as you go along to make sure that you understand what you read. And, of

course, read to remember. Every once in a while, remind yourself of your task - to understand and remember what you read. Notice especially any italicized words or phrases. Authors use italics to emphasize important terms, concepts and principles.

Read everything, including tables, graphs and other illustrations, as well as the main text. Illustrations emphasize important points in the text and clarify them. Sometimes an illustration will convey vividly what a whole page of the book is about. In other cases, illustrations convey information that cannot be expressed easily in words.

Recite. Recitation is one of the most important techniques of effective study; yet it is very much neglected because it takes effort. When one just reads, one has the comfort of thinking that what is read is understood and remembered, but this is generally not true. To make certain that you understand and remember, you should stop periodically and try to recall to yourself what you have read. In other words, you should recite. At this point, for example, you might ask yourself what you have read so far in this section. Try to recall the main headings and the principal ideas under each heading. Can you give a synopsis of your reading without looking at the pages? Try to do it; then check yourself. See whether you have covered everything. If not, note your omissions and errors. Then a little later, recite again. As you read, stop at intervals to recite the substance of each major section of a chapter. When you review for examinations, again make recitation a substantial part of your preparation. There are at least two good reasons for this emphasis on recitation. One is that recitation serves to keep your attention on the task, for you obviously cannot daydream while you are trying to recall something. Another is that it lets you correct mistakes; it shows you where you are weakest and where, in the second reading, you can profitably spend the most time.

Recitation is more useful for some subjects than for others. In general, it helps most when what you have to learn is disconnected and not too meaningful. If, for example, you have to memorize a number of rules, items, names, laws or formulae, recitation is of great help. On the other hand, for meaningful story like material such as one finds in history or philosophy, recitation is somewhat less useful - though never useless. Hence you should vary the amount of time or the proportion of study time that you use for recitation according to the subject you are studying. Because most text books contain considerable factual information, probably one-third to one-half the time spent in studying it should be spent in recitation.

Review. If you learn something perfectly but do not review it, you will find that a few days or even hours later you will remember only a small part of it. Here are some pointers for the best way of reviewing. The best times for review are immediately after first studying and again just before an examination. It will also pay to have one or two reviews in between.

The first review may be fairly brief because there has been little time for forgetting, and it should be mainly one of recitation. The review just before the examination should also emphasize recitation, but it should be much more intensive. Intervening reviews that are relatively brief help, and these may emphasize rereading somewhat more than recitation. Reviewing should not be crammed into the last few hours before an examination.

Taking lecture notes

The Survey Q3R Method applies to lectures as well as to textbooks, but not in every detail. Obviously, it is difficult or impossible to survey a lecture in advance unless the instructor does it for you. Each student must, therefore, provide their own organization and headings as they go. It is important, however, to organize. Do this by trying to identify the lecturer's main points. Condense paragraphs into simple phrases or sentences, and do this in words of your own phrasing. Sometimes this is difficult to do, and you are forced to take copious, unorganized notes to keep up with the lecture. In such circumstances, do not spend so much time trying to take neat, well-organized notes that you lose the main points of the lecture. Almost any notes are better than none at all. Still the more organized your notes are, the better they will be.

How many notes should one take? This will vary with the lecture, the lecturer, and the learning style of the student. Some students do their best by taking many notes, and others do best by taking relatively few. If you write easily, it is probably best to take extensive notes.

Review is even more important for lecture notes than it is for reading. Because lecture notes are incomplete, a brief review after class usually is necessary to fill in omitted essentials and correct minor errors. Waiting too long to do that makes one forget, and one may easily wind up saying, "My lecture notes just don't make sense". It will often pay to rewrite lecture notes completely shortly after each lecture, both to provide a good review with recitation and to make it possible to understand your notes later. If there are any points you don't understand, raise them with a tutor or the lecturer at the next lecture. If you have not understood something it's likely that several other students have not understood as well. So you will usually be doing other students a favour by asking the lecturer to clarify any obscure points.

Lecture notes are best kept together in a loose-leaf binder or folder. Use the same kind of paper for all notes in one subject. Number the pages to keep them in order. Make sure that you have a system that is good enough to let you find all your material quickly and to study it easily.

Student study groups

Some students like to organize regular study groups with several other people in the same course to talk about course content, clarify points in lecture notes (and loan lecture notes if someone missed a class) and help each other prepare for tests. If you like working with other people this can be a useful way to enhance your motivation for study and make it more enjoyable. Ask your lecturer or course representative to make an announcement in class if you wish to find other people who want to form a study group. If a group you are in spends too much time doing other things besides study, look for another study group.

Finding a suitable study environment

1. Try to study at the same place(s) regularly.
2. Ensure that the study desk area is a well lighted one, but avoid too intense lighting.
3. If you have a study room, set it up so it feels comfortable for study.

4. Learning of verbal material is most efficient when the study period is divided into short periods of learning separated by short periods of rest. Timetable yourself to study for a period you find comfortable (e.g. half-an-hour) and then take a five minute break. During this rest be sure to engage in something you like doing, such as taking a short, vigorous walk or listening to one segment of a musical recording. This pleasurable activity has to be one that can be easily left at the end of the five minutes - unfortunately, conversations with friends often don't fit into this category.

Conclusion: Enjoying Psychology

Human beings are the most complex organism in existence. We each have to live with, work with and understand human beings throughout our lives. Psychology is the study of human thinking, feeling and behaviour. Most people find it a fascinating subject; the Psychology staff certainly do. We hope students will develop an ongoing interest in psychology and people as a result of their study in the Psychology Department. As questions arise which you would like to know more about, ask Psychology staff. If we know the answer, we will be happy to pass it on to you. If we don't, we should be able to assist you in your search for information.

Enjoy the psychology you study. All the theories, statistics, models, textbooks, graphs, tables, experiments, surveys and even many animal studies are simply tools employed in order to understand human beings better. Understanding will never be complete; that is one thing that makes psychology so exciting. We sincerely hope you find your study of psychology interesting and exciting.

Information relating to the Psychology Department can be obtained on The University of Waikato website <http://www.psychology.waikato.ac.nz>.