

Contents and Format of APA Papers

“Content” sections

- Abstract
- Introduction
- Methods
- Results
- Discussion

Today’s Topic: The Method

Subheadings:

- Participants
- Materials
- Design
- Procedure

Not all headings are always used.

Participants

- Who were the participants in your study, and how many?
- How were participants selected (what kind of sampling technique was used)?
- Include age, gender (if you know them) and any other demographic characteristics of participants you are interested in that you are measuring.
- (Referred to as ‘Subjects’ when studying animals)

Materials

- May be called Stimuli, Apparatus, Equipment
- Are you using any special equipment?
 - E.g. a computer program, special machines such as digital audio equipment, etc.

Procedure

- Was the research conducted using a correlational, quasi-experimental, or experimental design?
- How were participants assigned to conditions?
- Did you use an independent groups or repeated measures design?
- What was the independent variable and what were the levels?
- What was the DV? How was it measured?

Procedure

- What steps made up the experiment?
- Were there practice trials?
- What instructions were given to your participants? Did this differ by condition of the independent variable?
- Where was the experimenter while the participant performed the task?
- Any other information needed to provide a step-by-step account of the participants' experience, from consent to debriefing.

Keep it simple!

- No need to describe the ordinary.
- No need to explain standard experimental design, terms, or methodology.
- Describe what the participants experienced.
- No need to repeat any descriptions.
- Omit needless words.

Formatting

- 12 pt Times Roman
- Double-space everything
- 1" margins on all sides
- Do not justify lines
- Use past tense.