

## [Here is more information about the Term Paper Requirement](#)

### **The Proposal**

Each student must submit a paper, approximately 2,500-3,000 words in length (equivalent to about 12-15 pages of traditional double-spaced text). The focus of the paper will be a critical analysis of current theory and scientific thinking in psychology and related fields about some specific issue related to addictions. Students must obtain the instructor's approval of their paper topic in advance. Note that page/word limit is *exclusive* of words used for title and or listing of references.

In choosing a topic for your paper, you should think in terms of a very specific question pertaining to the nature, causes, or treatment/prevention of some specific form of addictive behavior for which you would propose an answer that would then be supported by the information you draw from your sources. Remember, your term paper topic *cannot* overlap with your presentation topic.

For example:

- Are children from alcoholic families more at risk for drinking problems?
- Is methadone maintenance an appropriate form of treatment for heroin addiction?
- How effective is cognitive-behavioral therapy in the prevention of relapse?
- Is peer influence a significant contributor to the onset of drug use among adolescents?
- Is there some chemical "imbalance" in the brain that causes or contributes to any form of addiction?
- Can alcoholics ever learn to drink safely?
- Is DARE an effective program for preventing substance abuse among young people?
- Are alcohol and marijuana "gateway" drugs that lead to more serious drug abuse or addiction?
- Should binge-drinking by college students be regarded as more than just a "phase" they go through?
- Does the use of stimulant drugs in the treatment of children with ADHD put them at risk for drug abuse?

### **The Proposal**

Once you have a specific question, you should also start to think about your answer to the question. Do some preliminary searching for references to make sure that the question is one that psychologists and other social and behavioral scientists have looked at and that there are enough good quality sources available for you to use. I will be asking you to submit a brief proposal to me by the end of Week 3 that includes the following:

- In several sentences, describe for me your question as well as the possible answer you hope to investigate and a brief explanation of why you favor that answer.

- A list for me of at least three references you think you might use that will provide support for your answer. Because I am requiring that at least *two* of your sources must be research studies published in scientific journals (see below), it would be especially helpful for you *to include at least one such study* among your list of proposed references, and ideally 2 or even 3. Submit these in proper APA style: authors (last name plus initials), year, exact title of source, where published—consult my Guide to APA Style here in Supplementary Materials. However, because you will send your proposal to me as a text message in Mail, do not worry about the formatting that APA also requires (italics, indents, etc.).
- Along with each reference, please also include a sentence or two that summarizes the information that you think you will be able to get from this source to help you with your paper.

I will only be looking for three references with your proposal, but as you look for these, make sure the other good sources will also be available, because in your final paper I will expect to see at least 6 separate quality sources. You can also use any of this course's required readings, but those must be in addition to the minimum of six. *Except under unusual circumstances, popular magazines, self-help books, popular Internet sites, dictionaries and encyclopedias (including Wikipedia), and basic textbooks, should not be used as references.*

Please note that using Internet references can be especially tricky, because some of the sites are maintained by reputable educational, professional and scientific organizations, but many are of no more value than something you might read in some tabloid newspaper! If you locate any Internet site that you would like to use for your paper, ***you should seek my approval.*** And here, too, I need authors and title, and I need the full URL for whatever specific pages from an Internet you propose to use. *Simply identifying the person or organization that maintains the site, or simply giving the URL of its homepage, is not sufficient.*

The proposal is critical to your success in this paper, so I strongly suggest you start working on this as soon as possible. The more quickly you can understand what I look for and get my approval, the more quickly you can get started on the paper.

Please note that your term paper topic must be separate and distinct from what you do for your Presentation.

The Proposal is worth 20 points. This is not a lot, but I hope it encourages you to take the proposal seriously, because *you may not submit a draft of your paper or the final paper itself until you have obtained my approval of your proposal.* I will respond quickly, and I will keep working with you as needed until we get it in shape.

### **The Paper (Follow Formatting and Submitting instructions listed below)**

Your paper will be based on references that you are able to locate, using books or book chapters, articles from professional and scientific periodicals, and appropriate Internet sites that I have approved. Among your references (of which there should be a total of at least 6), you will be required to locate at least *two research studies published in*

*scientific journals* that provide some hard data that are directly supportive of your answer to the question you have chosen to investigate. Use my guide to locating references that is available here in Supplementary Materials.

The paper itself should be organized as follows:

1. Title: Include your name, the title of your paper (which should be up to 15 words long and should clearly indicate the precise focus of your paper), and your name.
2. Abstract: Following APA style, this will be approximately 150 words and represents a brief summary of your question, your answer, information presented in support of your answer, and your conclusion.
3. Introduction (usually only a page or two): Begin with a brief discussion of the question you will be looking at. Maybe include a few statistics, some descriptive information or definitions, a brief summary of what psychologists are currently asking or thinking and possible answers that have been proposed. Then clearly state exactly what you intend to do in the pages that follow - the question you are asking and the answer you intend to argue for.
4. Review of Literature (the main body of the paper): Present what you have learned from the reference materials you have located. Discuss in some detail the various opinions, arguments, research findings, and theories that deal with your question, with particular emphasis on those that provide support for the answer you are arguing for. Remember that at least *two* of your sources must be *research studies published in scientific journals*. Especially important here is that you clearly identify the sources you are using. Keep using such phrases as "According to...," or "In a study conducted by...," or "In the opinion of...," or "So-and-so has argued that...," or "So-and-so believes that...."
5. Analysis and Conclusion: In addition to presenting information from your sources, you also need to analyze it, objectively and critically to enable you to reach an intelligent conclusion that reflects your appreciation of the difference between *opinion* and statements that have a reasonable amount of *scientific support*, and your recognition that you can't always believe everything you read. How sound are the arguments? How logical and consistent are the opinions? How much supporting evidence is there from research studies? How solid is this evidence? What are the possible counter-arguments? Flowing directly from your analysis, you should now be ready to end with your conclusion. Do you think there is adequate support for your answer to your question? Are there other possible answers? What sort of additional research would help? What does all this mean, and why is it important? Why should anybody care? Especially important here is your appreciation for the complexity of the issues involved and your ability to think through these issues carefully and critically before arriving at a conclusion that is supported by the information you have presented and your analysis of it.
6. References: At the end of your paper, attach a list of all references you cited in your paper—and only those references, along with full bibliographical information for each (authors' or organizations' names, year of publication, title of book or article or Internet page, book publisher information or name, volume and page of article or URL for Internet site), arranged alphabetically by first author's last name. Look at any of our texts to see how this is done.

Note that the requirement of 2500-3000 words is exclusive of the Title, the Abstract, and your References.

[This type of term paper is kind of like all those lawyer shows you've seen on television. Imagine you are member of the jury and that the answer you have chosen is like the defendant. The information you have obtained from your sources is like all the evidence that the lawyers presented during the trial. Your conclusion in your paper is like the verdict you would have to reach as a juror after carefully weighing all the evidence: guilty or not guilty = supported or not supported. And just as in a trial you always know who is testifying and as a juror you have to decide how much confidence to have in that person's testimony, so, too, in your paper you must be sure to cite your sources very carefully, and in your analysis you have to carefully weight their credibility to help you reach your "verdict."]

### ***NOTES ABOUT CITING SOURCES:***

General Principle: Correctly citing sources in the text of a paper is very important for at least two reasons. First, citing sources lets your instructor appreciate the amount of work you have done to locate and use good sources.

Second, it is a matter of *academic honesty*. Every time you make reference to an idea, opinion, fact, theory, argument, research study, finding, etc., that you have found in some source, you must clearly indicate that source to show that it is the work of another. This applies not just to direct quotes; every single time you are drawing from, or paraphrasing, one of your sources, you must cite it as your reference. To present the material without citing the source is dishonest because it suggests that the material is your own. Such dishonesty constitutes what is known as **plagiarism**, one of the most serious of academic offenses, and one which can lead to charges being brought against a student and/or a failing grade for this paper.

Rules for Citing Sources in APA style (look at your texts to see how it is done, and consult my Guide to APA Style here in Supplementary Materials):

1. What to cite: A reference is cited by giving the last name of the author(s) or organization and the year of publication. The name(s) and year should correspond exactly to the listing on the References list at the end of the paper. When using a direct quotation (which should be done only if exceptionally important), use quotation marks, and also include the page number(s) where the quote appeared in the source.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** A paper is your work and should be **IN YOUR OWN WORDS**; using quotations is generally not appropriate, unless there is some very special reason why you want to use someone else's exact words. And it is also important to note what we mean by "your words": you may not simply "cut and paste" wording from any source and pass it off as your own. You must either put the words in quotation marks and cite the source precisely (but as I have said, I don't really want you to use quotations at all), or you must significantly rephrase to make sure you are using your own words. Failure to do so constitutes **plagiarism**, one of the most serious of academic offenses, and I will severely penalize any such instance of academic dishonesty.

2. When to cite: The citation should occur *as soon in the sentence or paragraph as possible*, to immediately draw the attention of your reader to the fact that you are drawing material from an outside source. If you continue over the course of several sentences or even several paragraphs to draw from the same source, it is not necessary to continue to cite it. The general rule is that whenever your reader may not be sure of the source of your information, you should cite the source.
3. Where to cite: Right in the text of the paper. Do *not* use footnotes or endnotes. References should be cited as part of the natural flow of text, and as soon as you begin to present information from the source. Do *not* just stick a citation at the end of a paragraph.

NOTE: You can only cite as a reference the book or article that you yourself read. If that book or article contains a reference to some other work, you may *not* cite that other work as a reference. Thus, if you are reading a book by Smith (1996), and Smith describes a study by Jones (1992), and you want to also mention Jones's study, your reference is Smith. You could say, "In a 1992 study by Jones (Smith, 1996)..." or, "According to Smith (1996), Jones conducted a study..." but you cannot simply cite Jones. In similar fashion, your References page at the end of your paper will list only the actual works that you located and used.

I am providing you the opportunity to revise and resubmit. If you want to take advantage, I am asking for an initial submission of your paper by the end of Week 7. I will grade and return the paper within a week, and you then will have the opportunity to use my feedback and to discuss the paper with me to enable you to make appropriate revisions. The deadline for the final version of your Term Paper is the end of Week 10 (which is a Saturday).

**Formatting and Submitting:** Please adhere to the following guidelines when writing the paper:

- Use Microsoft *Word*, or, if you don't have it, any word processing program with the document saved in Rich Text Format (.rtf)
- Use 12 point font, black, and stick to common font styles (i.e., New Times Roman, Courier, Arial, Tahoma, Calibri)
- Double-space all text
- Indent each paragraph one tab
- You do not need to use a running head
- Title Page, Abstract, and References should be on separate pages
- References should be cited properly in the text and listed at the end under the heading 'References'; do not use any footnotes
- Please write the paper entirely *in your own words*; unless absolutely necessary to make a key point, **do not use any direct quotations** from any of your sources (and do not take words verbatim without quotation marks and citing the source because that constitutes plagiarism, a serious form of academic dishonesty).
- Citing references in the text and listing them in the References section should be done in accordance with APA style, as briefly described above and more fully in my Guide to APA Style here in Supplementary Materials

- Insert page numbers
- Refer to my "Guide to Common Writing Errors" included in this Supplementary Materials section.
- Proofread your paper carefully
- Staple all pages together