

Instructions for Peer Evaluation of Written Reports

As part of PSYC 101 (Sections 001 & 002), you are required to research one of three topics (which are listed in the course syllabus), write a brief report about it (~750 words), and submit it by the due date, which is 11:59 pm Friday October 26 2012. [As per the instructions in the course syllabus, your written report must be submitted to both PeerScholar and to TurnItIn.com by the due date/time.] In addition, you are also required to evaluate/grade and comment on the written reports of 6 of your classmates. Your evaluations & comments must be submitted **no later than 11:59 pm Friday November 9 2012**. A detailed description on the written research report is provided in the course syllabus. This present document gives instructions for how to evaluate and comment on the written reports of your peers.

After all written reports have been submitted, each of them will be assigned (on October 27 2012) to 6 peers for evaluation and for comments. The graders will be randomly selected from among all students in the course with accounts on PeerScholar. Each student/peer is required to evaluate/grade 6 different written reports, assign a grade to each, as well as write one positive comment (i.e., a comment which highlights a specific strong point in the report) and one critical constructive comment (i.e., a comment which highlights a specific weak, confusing, unclear aspect in the report) about each.

Page 2 of this document is a scoring rubric you will use in evaluating/grading and commenting on the written reports of your peers. Please study this rubric carefully, as you can also use it as a guide for writing your own research report. The grade you assign to each report – a score out of 100 -- must be consistent with the rubric.

The quality of the full set of comments written by each student (i.e., 2 comments on each of 6 reports) will be graded by the TA. The quality of your comments counts for 4% of your course grade. To earn the full 4%, your comments must be thoughtful, clear, relevant, carefully written and instructive for the authors of the reports. A positive comment like "nice paper" is empty, not meaningful and will be graded as such; similarly, a critical comment which fails to instruct (e.g., the 2nd paragraph is unclear) or is merely negative (e.g., your grammar is poor) will be graded as empty. Research has shown that having to find and constructively comment on both positive elements and shortcomings in the work of others serves to improve students' written communication skills.

The final grade assigned to each written report is the median of the grades assigned by the 6 peer evaluators. There is considerable research showing that grades derived in this manner are of the same quality as grades assigned by TAs or by instructors. More importantly, by using peer evaluators, the author of each report will not only receive a grade on their work, but they will also receive the written comments of 6 different peers.

Definitions

A positive comment consists of one or more sentences that clearly identify something you like about your peer's assignment, something you think he/she did very well, something which you might wish to imitate the next time you have to write a report.

A critical constructive comment consists of one or more sentences which identifies a shortcoming (e.g., something that is not adequately explained, not logically connected or integrated with other parts of the report, poorly illustrated, not correctly interpreted, a poorly chosen reference) AND which suggests a specific option or means by which this shortcoming could be remedied.

Scoring Rubric For Research Report

| | Excellent (14) | Good (~10) | Fair (~7) | Deficient (<7) |
|--|--|---|--|---|
| Introduction: Identification & initial analysis of the problem (14%) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Many/most issues/problems or concepts raised by topic are clearly identified and described ✓ Issue(s)/problem(s) or concept(s) selected for further research is/are clearly identified & justified ✓ Report thesis (i.e., author's position on the topic) and objective of report is clearly stated | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ A few issues/problems or concepts raised by topic are identified/ described ✓ Issue(s)/problem(s) or concept(s) selected for further research is/are identified, but without giving any reason(s) for why it/they were chosen ✓ An attempt is made to state a report thesis and a report objective | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ At least one issue/problem or concept raised by topic is identified/ described ✓ An attempt is made to state a report thesis ✓ No attempt to state a report objective | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ None of the issues/problems or concepts raised by topic are identified or described: what is described is not relevant to topic or to psychology ✓ Issues/problems or concepts raised are not relevant to research in psychology ✓ No statement of thesis or statement is unclear/confusing, and no report objective is provided |
| | Excellent (45-52) | Good (33-44) | Fair (20-32) | Deficient (<20) |
| Body: Using text & empirical research to illuminate the problem (52/100) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Links between report thesis & concepts, theories and/or findings from text & published articles are clearly stated ✓ References to text are appropriate & informative ✓ Selection/use of published article(s) is/are appropriate & informative ✓ Shows clear understanding of evidence, concepts, theories or methods ✓ Flow of ideas is logical & clearly laid out ✓ All parts are relevant & meaningfully connected | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Some links between report thesis & concepts, theories and/or findings from text & published articles are stated or at least attempted ✓ References to text are relevant, though they augment the report only minimally ✓ Selection/use of published article(s) is/are somewhat relevant ✓ Shows some understanding of evidence, concepts, theories or methods ✓ Flow of ideas is ok, possible to follow ✓ Most parts are connected | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ An attempt is made to link report thesis to at least one concept, theory and/or findings from text & from published articles ✓ References to text are topic relevant, though without adding anything ✓ Selection/use of published article(s) is minimally relevant; they add minimally to the author's argument ✓ Shows only superficial understanding of evidence, concepts, theories or methods ✓ Flow of ideas is poor, difficult to follow ✓ Some parts are not connected | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Link between report thesis & concepts, theories and/or findings from text & published articles is missing ✓ References to text are missing &/or inappropriate ✓ Selection/use of published article(s) is/are not clear, not explained or uninformative ✓ Evidence, concepts, theories or methods are used inappropriately ✓ Flow of ideas is impossible to follow |
| | Excellent (14) | Good (~10) | Fair (~7) | Deficient (<7) |
| Conclusion: Connecting Introduction & Body & identification of limitation(s) (14%) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Clear statement of conclusion(s) which is/are justified ✓ Conclusion ties up all/most loose ends (e.g., it addresses objections that might be raised to arguments or evidence in Body). ✓ Limitations of the evidence, concepts, theories or research reported in the Body (if any) are clearly acknowledged ✓ Implications of thesis are discussed | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Some statement of conclusion(s) which is/are meaningful ✓ Conclusion ties up some loose ends & it addresses at least a few objections that might be raised to arguments or evidence in Body ✓ Some limitations of the evidence, concepts, theories or research reported in the Body are recognized ✓ Implications are not discussed | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Conclusion(s) are missing, and/or not connected with other parts of report ✓ Conclusion fails to tie up some loose ends (e.g., it does not address objections that might be raised to arguments or evidence in Body) ✓ No limitations of the evidence, concepts, theories or research reported in the Body are recognized ✓ No discussion of implications | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Conclusion is missing ✓ Conclusion does not connect either with Body or with Introduction ✓ Conclusion does not explore either limitations or implications of ideas expressed in Body and/or in thesis |
| | Excellent (16-20) | Good (13-15) | Fair (9-12) | Deficient (<9) |
| Format & writing style issues (20%) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Writing is clear & error free, good word choice ✓ All parts of report are correct in length ✓ All citations & references in APA format | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Writing is clear & with at most a few typos, punctuation errors, and/or poor word selections ✓ Most parts of report adhere to required length ✓ At most minor errors in the format of citations & references | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Writing is unclear in many places, includes typos, punctuation errors, and/or poor word selections ✓ No part of the report adheres to the stated length requirements ✓ Citations & references are not consistent with APA format | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Writing includes typos, grammatical errors, punctuation errors ✓ Report does not adhere to length limits ✓ Format requirements are not met ✓ Citations & references are missing |