

# STRENGTHEN YOUR PSYCH LAB REPORT

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Australian  
College of  
Applied  
Psychology

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# ACAP

# HOW TO USE THIS RECORDING

You can:

**WATCH THE VIDEO STRAIGHT THROUGH**

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**USE THE PAUSE BUTTON TO STOP AND  
DO THE ACTIVITIES**

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**SLIDES ARE AVAILABLE TO DOWNLOAD  
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<https://sls.navitas-professional.edu.au/strengthen-your-psych-lab-report-3>

# WEBINAR GOALS

During this webinar you will learn how to...

**INTEGRATE SOURCES EFFECTIVELY**

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**IMPROVE PARAGRAPH LOGIC AND FLOW**

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**USE PASSIVE VOICE**

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**CREATE STRONG SENTENCES**

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# INTEGRATING SOURCES EFFECTIVELY

Issue: In the literature and/or discussion section of the lab report, many students simply summarise one article after the other without showing the relationship between ideas.

Solution: Organise the material based on ideas, rather than authors. Try to find patterns in the literature and group studies meaningfully. Some approaches to presenting information could be:

- historically/chronologically
- comparative
- problem-solution
- opinion-reason
- methodological

# Integrating sources effectively

There has been a deficiency in research for witness memory of auditory information, and studies on the interaction between visual and auditory information at encoding have been even more scarce (McAllister et al., 2005). Some studies have focused on the effects on speech content (Wright & Wareham, 2001) while others on voice identification itself (McAllister et al., 2005; Cook & Wilding, 2013; Yarmey, 2003). Of this last group, Yarmey presented slides of a mock rape and a simultaneous voice recording..... Yarmey speculated auditory memory..... However, he found no such relationship..... There were some limitations with Yarmey's method, as the author recognises; the use of slides and a separate audio taped voice is not naturalistic, but more importantly there was no audio only condition.....(Yarmey, 2003).

In their paper on cross-modal effects, McAllister et al. (2005) specifically set out to address some of the methodological issues with Yarmey's study. They used a mock crime method where participants were given ..... The researchers found that ..... resulting .....

Shows that the student understands how key sources relate to the topic sentence and each other. Good choice of main expert source and correct and concise summary of what he or she says.

Student shows how other studies relate to the source just discussed.

# 3 ways to use in-text references

- 1. Emphasising the information** – put the reference at the end.

*Individuals with psychopathic traits show a propensity to engage in acts of deception (Cooper, 2014).*

- 2. Emphasising the author** – put the reference at the beginning.

*Cooper (2014) found that individuals with psychopathic traits show a propensity to engage in acts of deception.*

*According to Cooper (2014), individuals with psychopathic traits show a propensity to engage in acts of deception.*

# Three ways to use in-text references

- 3. Emphasising both the information and the author –**  
Refer in a general way to the fact that research has been done and again only give the specific reference towards the end of the sentence or in brackets after it.
  - *Research indicates that that individuals with psychopathic traits show a propensity to engage in acts of deception (Cooper, 2014).*
  - *It is widely acknowledged that individuals with psychopathic traits show a propensity to engage in acts of deception (Cooper, 2014; Leigh & McKnight, 2015).*

# Activity 1

- Reference this sentence from an article by Heath and Moore (2011) in two different ways. (Note: The sentence has already been paraphrased)

*Memory for voices can be highly unreliable even after short delays between exposure and recognition.*

*1. Memory for voices can be highly unreliable even after short delays between exposure and recognition (Heath & Moore, 2011).*

*2. Heath and Moore (2011) state that memory for voices can be highly unreliable even after short delays between exposure and recognition.*

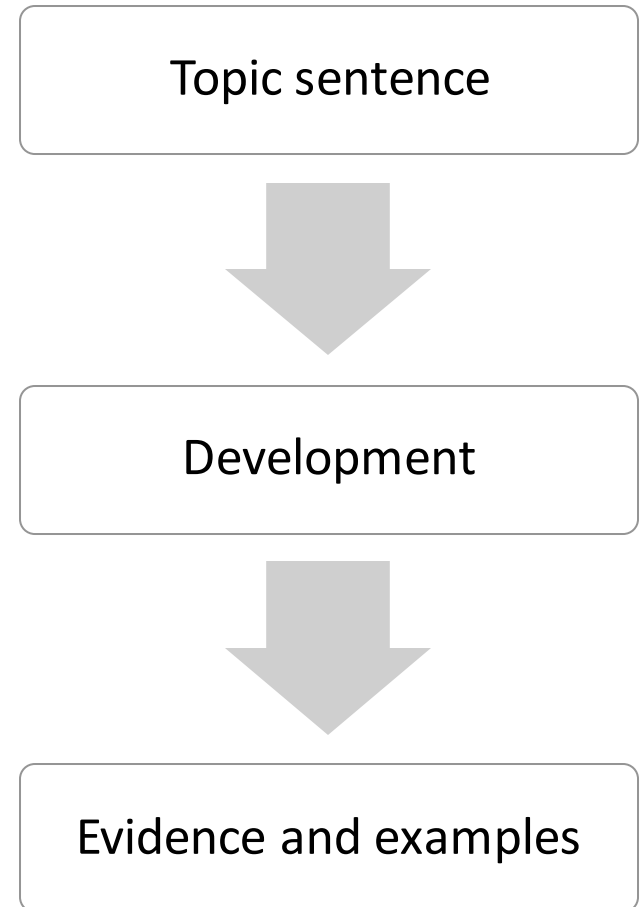
*3. Heath and Moore (2011) state that memory for voices can be highly unreliable even after short delays between exposure and recognition (Heath & Moore, 2011).*



# Improving logic and flow

# Improving logic and flow

- Issue: Some lab reports contain a 'list' of sentences that aren't linked.
- Solution: Ensure your sentences in a paragraph have a clear and logical relation to each other. The relationship between sentences can be shown by using effective transition words (also known as connectors). Each sentence should relate to the central idea of the paragraph.



# Improving logic and flow

Leadership has been traditionally regarded as a male domain (Dunlevy, 2001). Many theorists have attempted to explain the differences pertaining to leadership success (Siger, 2006). One such explanation has been offered by Maccoby (2007), a developmental theorist, who suggests that sex role differences occur primarily through childhood interactions. That is, during the childhood years, patterns of behaviour emerge that may be seen to better equip males than females to be leaders. Although childhood interactions seem to affect leadership potential, they are not the only influences involved in determining leadership success. Parental, teacher and media influences, workplace practices and explanations, and biological factors are also important considerations in any comprehensive attempt to explain gender differences in leadership.

Referring back to previous sentence. Repetition of some vocabulary to show connection between ideas.

Restating and developing the idea further

Signaling that an opposing idea is being introduced

Adding ideas

# Connectors

|                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| comparison       | likewise, correspondingly, whereas, similarly |
| generalisation   | usually, typically, mainly, in general        |
| cause and effect | hence, therefore, because, since              |
| time/sequence    | meanwhile, subsequently, initially            |
| conclusion       | in summary, in brief, finally                 |
| highlight        | particularly, especially, mainly              |

# Activity 2

Complete the sentences by adding a connector.

1. The results support the first hypothesis, where it was predicted that individuals scoring high on primary psychopathy would be more willing to deceive compared to those who scored low. \_\_\_\_\_, the second hypothesis, that those scoring high on secondary psychopathy will be more willing to engage in risky decision making compared to individuals who scored low, was not supported by the results.

a) **However**

b) Similarly

c) Therefore

d) In addition

# Using passive voice

# Using active or passive voice

Issue: Students use first person (“I” and “we”) in the methods section of the lab report and/or repeat the phrase “the researcher” (e.g. *The researcher told the participants to listen to the recording. The researcher then gave the participants a survey. The researcher asked all participants to....*)

Solution: Change sentences from active to passive voice (where appropriate).

# Changing from active voice to passive voice

When we use an active verb (active voice), we say *what the subject does*. When we use a passive verb (passive voice), we say *what happens to the subject*.

Active:

*The researcher told **the participants** to listen to the recording.*

Passive:

*The participants were told to listen to the recording.*



# Activity 3

Change this sentence from active to passive voice.

*The researcher used an independent samples t-test to determine whether there was a significant difference between groups.*

# Activity 3

The researcher used an independent samples t-test to determine whether there was a significant difference between groups.

- ✓ **An independent samples t-test was used** to determine whether there was a significant difference between groups.

# Creating strong sentences

# Creating strong sentences

Issue: Students sometimes make grammatical errors which detract from the content of the lab report and can make the report look unprofessional.

Solution: Allow enough time to proofread and edit your report and check for common errors.



# Common sentence errors

What's wrong with each of these sentences?

1. *Smith et al. (2011) reports that this level of violence is harmful.*
2. *Most testimony is based on eyewitness memory as opposed to ear-witness memory. Thus receiving less attention in the psychological literature than eyewitness memory.*
3. *Differences between the experimental group and the control group exist in the test scores, this can lead to implications related to the reliability of a witness' testimony.*

# Common sentence error #1

## Subject-verb disagreement

Subject-verb disagreement occurs when there is an incorrect mix of singular and plural for the subject and verb.

- ✗ *Smith et al. (2011) reports that this level of violence is harmful.*
- ✓ *Smith et al. (2011) **report** that this level of violence is harmful.*

# Common sentence error #2

## Sentence fragment

A sentence fragment occurs when sentences are missing a main verb or clause.

- ✘ *Most testimony is based on eyewitness memory as opposed to ear-witness memory. Thus receiving less attention in the psychological literature than eyewitness memory.*
- ✔ *Most testimony is based on eyewitness memory as opposed to ear-witness memory. **Thus, ear-witness memory has received** less attention in the psychological literature than eyewitness memory.*

# Common sentence error #3

## Run-on sentence

A run-on sentence occurs when there are joined sentences that should be separated.

- ✘ *Differences between the experimental group and the control group exist in the test scores, this can lead to implications related to the reliability of a witness' testimony.*
- ✔ *Differences between the experimental group and the control group exist in the test scores; this can lead to implications related to the reliability of a witness' testimony.*
- ✔ *Differences between the experimental group and the control group exist in the test scores, and this can lead to implications related to the reliability of a witness' testimony.*



# Revising and editing

Editing involves revising sentences and phrases so that they are clear and understandable to the reader. Ask yourself...

- Does what I have written make sense?
- Have I integrated the literature well and referenced all sources accurately?
- Is it well-structured and does it contain linking words to create cohesion?
- Is it written in an academic style and is it free from grammatical errors?

# Tips for revising and editing

- Read and redraft your work at least three times.
- Leave at least an hour between each revision – half a day or overnight is even better
- To help you make sense of what you have **actually** written rather than what you **think** you have written...
  - Use printouts for checking drafts rather than checking them on screen
  - Read your work aloud
  - Get someone else to read your work out aloud to you
  - Record yourself reading your work then play it back

# More resources

- Short interactive language videos (improving my sentences, transition words):  
<https://sls.navitas-professional.edu.au/language-support-0>
- Rules of academic writing: <https://sls.navitas-professional.edu.au/academic-writing-0>
- Paraphrasing tips <https://vimeo.com/233262966>
- Grammarly: <https://sls.navitas-professional.edu.au/grammarly>
  
- [Sample Lab Report APA 7](#)
  
- Writing the Experimental Report: Overview, Introductions, and Literature Reviews...  
[https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/subject\\_specific\\_writing/writing\\_in\\_the\\_social\\_sciences/writing\\_in\\_psychology\\_experimental\\_report\\_writing/experimental\\_reports\\_1.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/subject_specific_writing/writing_in_the_social_sciences/writing_in_psychology_experimental_report_writing/experimental_reports_1.html)
  
- Writing in Psychology:  
[https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/subject\\_specific\\_writing/writing\\_in\\_the\\_social\\_sciences/writing\\_in\\_psychology\\_experimental\\_report\\_writing/index.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/subject_specific_writing/writing_in_the_social_sciences/writing_in_psychology_experimental_report_writing/index.html)
  
- Tables & Figures APA 7  
[https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research\\_and\\_citation/apa\\_style/apa\\_formatting\\_and\\_style\\_guide/apa\\_tables\\_and\\_figures.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_formatting_and_style_guide/apa_tables_and_figures.html)

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