# HW 5: Article Summary

## Due:

## Points: 10

## **PURPOSE**

This assignment will give you practice reading, understanding, and summarizing key information from a primary research article. The ability to write a clear and concise summary of a research article will be essential to completing the literature review assignment for this class and will also be useful in all of your future scholarly writing assignments.

## Knowledge:

After completing this assignment, you will understand:

* The background, methodology, and results of a research study on your chosen topic
* How to write a brief, structured overview of a primary research article

## Skills:

After completing this assignment, you will be able to:

* Identify the most important information in a primary research article
* Restate the article text in your own words
* Condense information into clear, succinct sentences
* Assess the importance or impact of a research study
* Conform to APA formatting requirements

## **TASK**

1. Find a primary, peer-reviewed journal article that you want to include in your literature review. Do not use a review article or meta-analysis for this assignment. Make sure the article you are summarizing describes original research (Hint: look for a methods section with participants/subjects and a results section). Upload a PDF or scanned copy of the article in the “Sources for Lit Review” assignment folder. I cannot grade the summary without also having the original article. Note: This cannot be the same article you answered questions on in Homework #3. Choose another article that you plan to include in your literature review.
2. Write a brief (no more than 1 page), organized, succinct summary of the findings from the primary research article you chose. The article summary should be typed, double-spaced, and with font and margins conforming to APA style guidelines. Do not include any direct quotes in your summary. Upload your summary to D2L as a Microsoft Word (or compatibly) file. The summary should not exceed 1 page. (See example below)
3. Include an APA formatted reference at the top of your page (see example below).

Your summary should answer the following questions (generally in this order):

1. What was the purpose or main topic of the study? (Note: Do not start with, “The purpose of this study was…” Instead, try something along the lines of, “Smith and Jones (YEAR) evaluated the effect of \_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_.” or “…investigated the relationship between \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_.”)
2. What were the main variables of the study and how were they defined or measured? (For example, if the study examined the relationship between personality and pet ownership, how did the researchers measure or define personality?)
3. Who were the participants or subjects in the study? (You don’t need to list all of the details, but give your reader a sense of who was involved (e.g. adults, children, monkeys) and how many people (or animals) were studied.
4. What methods were used in the study? (Note: You don’t need a lot of details here, but I need to know the basics. Did the researchers give the participants surveys? Did they conduct behavioral observations? Did they do an MRI? How many experimental groups were there (if applicable)? Was there random assignment? Try to combine this information into one or two sentences).
5. What were the main findings? (Note: You don’t need to go into details about the statistical tests here, but I do need to know basics. For example: “a significant positive correlation was found between \_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_,” or “participants exposed to the treatment scored significantly higher on the test than participants in the control group.”
6. What are the implications of this study? In other words, why was it important? How did it add to the literature in this area?

Some Hints:

* This will require multiple drafts. Often, your first draft will be way too long, and that is ok. It is better to start out writing down everything you think is important. Then, go through and decide what you can take out or shorten without losing the key points of your summary.
* Paraphrase. Do not use direct quotes for this assignment. Be careful not to plagiarize (including just using a thesaurus to change a few words). Make sure you understand the study well enough to describe it in your own words. Assume that your audience is well educated but is naïve to this topic. Explain the study using formal, but straight-forward language.
* Eliminate wordiness, including most adverbs ("very", "clearly"). "The results clearly showed that there was no significant difference between the groups” can be shortened to "The researchers found no significant difference between the groups".
* Because this is an article summary, you do not need to put in-text citations throughout your summary. Do include an APA style reference at the top of your summary. I will assume that the information in your summary comes from that article.

## **CRITERIA**

Article Summary Rubric (1 point per item):

* Did the summary identify the main purpose or topic of the study?
* Did the summary identify the main variables of the study and how they were defined or measured?
* Did the summary describe the participants or subjects?
* Did the summary describe the methods used in the study?
* Did the summary clearly summarize the main findings of the study?
* Did the summary indicate why this study was important or how it added to the literature?
* Was the overall writing style clear and concise?
* Was proper paraphrasing used?
* Was the summary relatively free of grammar and spelling errors?
* Was the article citation in proper APA style?

\* See example summary on the following page. It may be helpful to use the above rubric to identify how (or whether) the example summary accomplishes each of the criteria. You can then use this rubric to assess whether your summary meets each of the criteria. Also refer to our class assignment in which we critiqued and revised poorly written summaries. \*

**An Example Summary**

Martin, A. L., Bloomsmith, M. A., Kelley, M. E., Marr, M. J., Maple, T. L. (2011). Functional analysis and treatment of human-directed undesirable behavior exhibited by a captive chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes*). *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis, 44,* 139 – 143. doi: 10.1901/jaba.2011.44-139.

Martin, Bloomsmith, Kelley, Marr, and Maple (2011) used a functional analysis technique to identify the underlying reinforcers for the behaviors of feces-throwing and spitting in a single captive chimpanzee. The researchers systematically exposed the chimpanzee to possible reinforcers (e.g., social attention, escape from a training task) in an alternating treatments design and recorded rates of the target behaviors under each condition. The chimpanzee’s rates of inappropriate behavior were highest during conditions in which he received social attention following the display of the target behaviors. This indicated that the chimpanzee’s feces-throwing and spitting were maintained by social attention from humans. The researchers then designed a function-based treatment plan in which inappropriate behaviors were ignored and an alternate behavior of holding onto a PVC ring was reinforced with social attention. This treatment plan successfully reduced the chimpanzee’s inappropriate behavior. This study represents the first use of functional analysis techniques with a chimpanzee and demonstrates the value of using a functional approach to address problem behaviors in captive animals.