ERA laboratory recording sheet

This blank form should be photocopied and used to organise your notes and draft the formal written report for your ERAs, which will help you complete school-assessed coursework activities in Units 3 and 4. Your final report should be between 750 and 1000 words. A guide to the word count for each section of the written research report appears in brackets for your reference.

Note: The language used in research reports needs to be clear and objective. It would be written in the third person (i.e. no 'I/we'), and would not mention any names of either the school or people involved.

Student name: ____________________________________________

Date: __________________________

Unit: _______________________

Learning outcome: ____________________________________________

Title of experiment: ____________________________________________

ABSTRACT (100–150 words)

While the Abstract would feature immediately after the Title in your research report, it is probably best for you to write this as the last step in the process so that you can more easily and clearly summarise the whole report.

The Abstract entails a brief summary of the whole report, referring to the aim/purpose, the main elements of the method, results, and conclusion drawn (relating back to the hypothesis). Within the space provided, write a paragraph of approximately 100–150 words describing the main features of your whole report.
INTRODUCTION (150–200 words)

Note: Remember to write down any sources you take information from and include them in the body of your report, as well as in the reference list. Refer to the current VCAA Study Design (2010) to identify the major idea or focus of the investigation.

1 Outline some of the relevant background information on the topic.

2 Key terms: Choose appropriate key terms that are relevant to your investigation, and find definitions for them in your textbook, other books, glossaries, or from a dictionary of psychology. Then paraphrase these definitions by putting them into your own words to demonstrate your understanding. Ensure that you also take note of your sources for your in-text citations and referencing.

3 Summarise any relevant prior research into your topic.
4 State the aim(s)/purpose of this piece of research.

5 State the hypothesis/es (a testable prediction).

6 Operationalise your hypothesis. That is, describe how the hypothesis will be shown/measured.

7 State the independent variable (IV). (What we as experimenters manipulate to cause a change in the behaviour.)

8 State the dependent variable (DV). (What changes as a result of the IV, or the measured behaviour.)

9 List any potential confounding variables (other factors that may influence the DV, thereby affecting the validity of the results).
METHOD (150–200 words)

Participants (subjects)

1. Describe the participants and characteristics (number, gender, age range, etc.).

2. How were the participants selected?

Materials

3. What equipment was used to do the experiment?

Procedure

4. Write a brief, step-by-step description of how the experiment was done.
5 List the controlled variables. (i.e. What was done to try to counter any extraneous variables?)

6 What experimental design was used to control for subject variables? How was this applied in this experiment?

7 How were the participants allocated to their group?

8 How were ethical considerations taken into account within the experiment?
RESULTS (150–200 words)

Summary of data: Organise your data appropriately.

1. Provide correctly labelled tables, graphs, charts and diagrams (attach these to this sheet if the space provided below is not sufficient).

   a. Table of data:
b Graph (appropriately labelled):


c Statistical analysis:


2 Describe the results obtained. (Do NOT mention the hypothesis here!)
DISCUSSION (200–250 words)

1 What are your conclusions based on the results? (Was the hypothesis supported by the data or not?)

2 How did the data prove or disprove your hypothesis? Describe/explain how you reached your conclusion.

3 Compare the results of this study to those from previous research. Are they consistent or contradictory? How do your findings relate to the theory (cited in the introduction)?

4 List any generalisations (i.e. relevance and implications of the findings to the wider population).
5. Evaluate this study (list any criticisms or limitations, and suggest how this experiment could be improved).

6. Identify any confounding variables (extraneous variables within the experimental design and/or its implementation that haven't been controlled and that may have affected the results). Comment on their effect on the reliability and validity of the findings.

7. Describe any ethical issues within this experiment.
REFERENCES

Psychology uses the Harvard system of citations and referencing. Most texts will explain this format and provide examples. A common mistake made by many students is to only have a reference list without having any in-text citations to show where you have quoted from the resources. Copying material from other sources without due acknowledgement via citations is treated in academia as plagiarism (cheating), so it is advisable to develop this practice as a habit now.

References should also be clearly presented in the proper format:

- For books: Author(s) surname, Initial(s), (Year of publication). Edition number. *Title of book*. City of publication: Publisher’s name.

- For Journal articles: Author(s) surname, Initial(s), (Year of publication). Title of article. *Title of Journal*, Volume number of journal, page numbers.

- For Internet sites: There is no standard format for referencing websites, but a common method is to provide full details of the World Wide Web address. It is advisable to also provide other details such as the author or provider, the title of the site and/or article in addition to the specific address (i.e. the URL), along with the specific date that the site was accessed. You should also underline the URL.

APPENDICES

Attach any other supplementary material that supports aspects within your report (e.g. stimuli, questionnaires, data sheets and/or additional calculations).

List these materials here.