

Context Matters

The key to achieving a high mark in the psychological Investigations paper is to contextualize your answer to the theme of what the investigation is about

A Psychologist uses a group of 12 children (6 boys and 6 girls) from one class in a primary school in a small Yorkshire village to investigate children's belief in Father Christmas.

Q Evaluate the sample used in this study.

This hasn't got it ...

The sample is very small so unrepresentative and can not be generalized to other children. However, there is a equal number of boys and girls so sex differences in what the children think will not be a problem

This has it ...

The sample is very small so unrepresentative of **the beliefs other children may have about Father Christmas** and can not be generalized. However, there is a equal number of boys and girls so sex differences in **whether children stop believing in Father Christmas at different ages** will be able to be determined

Have YOU got it?

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Psychologists use an independent measures design experiment to investigate if memory is better if a list of words is learned printed on green paper rather than white.

Q Outline **one** strength and **one** weakness of using the independent measures design in this experiment.

This hasn't got it ...

A strength is that there will be no carry-over effects from having participated in one condition before the other. However a weakness is that subject (or participant) variables could be a problem because of the individual differences between the ability of participants in each condition.

This has it ...

A strength is that there will be no carry-over effects from having participated in one condition before the other, **such as practice at remembering words that may improve memory performance** in the second condition. However a weakness is that subject (or participant) variables could be a problem because of **individual differences in the memory ability** of participants in each condition that could affect how many words are remembered regardless of whether they were printed on green or white paper.

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Psychologists conducted an observation study of shopping behaviour in a large supermarket

Q Evaluate the use of the observational method in this study

This hasn't got it ...

A strength is that the participants would not be aware they were being watched so would behave naturally, which increases the overall validity of the study. However, a problem could be that it may not always be possible to interpret and record behaviour accurately all the times

This has it ...

A strength is that the participants would not be aware they were being watched so would behave naturally and **go about their shopping as usual**, which increases the overall validity of the study. However, a problem could be that it may not always be possible to interpret and record behaviour accurately all the times. **For example, when the shop gets busy the observer's view could be obscured, and it may sometimes be difficult to tell for certain what items a shopper has put in their basket**

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Researchers conducted an investigation about dreaming behaviour using a self-report

Q Evaluate the use of the self-report method in this study

This hasn't got it ...

The use of the self-report method will allow the researchers to gather information quickly and it will be inexpensive. Also, the use of open questions allows people to express themselves fully. However, people may lie when answering questions in self-reports, which lowers the validity of the research findings. Also, closed questions restrict how people can respond.

**Now write your response
IN CONTEXT ...**