

# “Core Study Summary Sheet” - HELP!

**STUDY TITLE** - This will be introduced on the class PowerPoint or can be looked up in a text book, e.g. Heinemann, page 2. Be sure to add the YEAR in which the research was published.

**AUTHOR** - This is the person or people who did the study

## 1. Psychological perspective

This will be: Cognitive, Developmental, Social, Physiological or Individual Differences.

## 2. Background to the study

This is to give a context to the study - to show *why it was done*.

The context can be in the form of pre-existing theories or research in the relevant field.

When describing previous research be very brief - only give a name, year, one point on what was done and one on what was discovered.

Pre-existing theories only need mentioning very briefly.

Background should explain why the present researcher(s) came up with their hypothesis:

## 3. Aim or hypothesis

This is a statement of what the research(s) wanted to find out.

An aim is more general than a hypothesis.

A hypothesis states exactly what is expected to happen in the present study.

## 4. Research method used

This will be: Laboratory experiment, Natural experiment, Field experiment, Case study, Observational study, Questionnaire survey, etc., etc.

## 5. Identify three advantages and three disadvantages to this method

These are not specific to the particular study, but refer to the research method in general.

It is important to learn these by heart so fill out the boxes in full and list three of each.

## 6. Identify the IV and DV in this study (if expt.)

- “Identify” means “name”, not describe in detail.
- The IV can be difficult to spot if it is naturally occurring, e.g., gender, culture, age group, disease or condition.
- When naturally occurring, manipulating the IV is through allocating subjects to groups.
- The DV is the effect or difference the research is looking for.
- If the research method is *not experimental*, there will be no IV and DV, but there may be something that was “measured” in some way which you could put into the “DV” section.

### How was the IV manipulated and DV measured?

- This is where you explain how the IV and DV were *operationalised* in this study.
- What was the IV specifically, in practical terms? What was actually measured?
- Use sub-headings: “qualitative” and “quantitative” to show you realise which is which.

## 7. Describe the sample

Which people, person or animal(s) was the study on?

- Who were they? (gender, race, age range, occupation)
- Where were they from?
- How many? How many in each group?

If possible, say *how* the sample was selected as well – e.g., were they volunteers, an opportunity sample (e.g., a professor’s students), a patient, or unsolicited (i.e., naïve)?

## 8. Briefly outline the procedure

- Very briefly describe what was done and how.
- The procedure is like a recipe, but only needs to be in note form, e.g., using bullet points. Don't copy out whole sections of your textbook!
- Pick out which details are significant enough to include.
- If there was more than one experiment / test within the study, be sure to mention each of them, set out neatly and separately.
- Include any materials used.
- Do not mention any results here.

### ...include design, location, method, experimental controls

“**Design**” usually refers to experiments:

- ↪ “Independent groups design” or “Repeated measures design” (also “Matched pairs”)
- ↪ If developmental, mention if it was a longitudinal or snap-shot study here.

“**Method**” refers back to section 4 – but how was the method used in this study?

“**Experimental controls**” are measures taken to avoid confounding variables, demand characteristics, experimenter bias and other unwanted effects.

## 9. Results / findings

- Describe what happened (briefly).
- Summarise the data and/or pick out significant individual results – don't include them all
- Again, cover any separate experiments / tests within the study individually.
- Indicate “qualitative” and “quantitative” findings with sub-headings.
- This is *not* the place to draw conclusions about the results, or say what they suggest, so don't include any *explanations* of findings here.

## 10. What was concluded from the results?

This is the place to generalise, and to state how the researcher(s) *interpreted* the results. Do not introduce any findings here for the first time – they belong in the results section.

### How do the results relate to the research question?

Always refer back to the aim / hypothesis when giving conclusions.

## 11. Implications of the study? (What use is it? What meaning does it have for real life?)

- Apply the results and conclusions to real life situations.
- For example - “This study has shown that care must be taken when...”
- Beware of overlapping with other sections, e.g., do not give more conclusions here.
- Heinemann also has a good section “Is The Study Useful?” at the end of every chapter.

## 12. What are the main **EVALUATION ISSUES** raised by this study?

Do not skimp on this section – it is the most important! (No conclusions / implications here) Go onto a separate sheet if necessary - don't write tiny! Use **sub-headings** for each issue:

- **Generalisability** (Was the sample representative? Are the findings generalisable?)
- Was there anything good or bad about the **design, method, type of data** collected, etc.?
- **Ecological validity** (Were the results artificial or true to real life?)
- **Internal validity** (Did the study measure what it was supposed to measure?)
  - ↪ Was it lowered by demand characteristics; experimenter bias; confounding variables?
- **Reliability** (Were the findings consistent? Are they replicable?)
- **Ethnocentricity** (Did the researcher/s focus too much on their own culture, race, etc.?)
- Were any **ethical issues** raised? If so, were they dealt with?
- Did the study contribute to any major **debates** in Psychology:
  - Nature vs. Nurture
  - Situational vs. Individual
  - Reductionism vs. Holism
  - Determinism vs. Free Will