PSYCHOLOGY

Unit 1
Targeted Evaluation Task for School-assessed Coursework 1

2016 Test on Student-directed Research Investigation from 6 topics
for Outcome 3

RESPONSE GUIDE
The following is a response guide for the Targeted Evaluation Task, which provides a detailed summary of the expected responses for each criterion of this task. Each criterion is allocated a percentage of the total marks; please refer to the marking sheet.

**TITLE** – Statement that describes the nature of the study.
Title should be one sentence and make reference to the independent and dependent variable.  
*E.g.* – *Investigating the impact of alcohol consumption on driving ability*

**ABSTRACT** – A brief summary of the whole report, including aim, hypothesis, method, results and conclusion.
To be presented as a single paragraph, including information regarding the aim, method, results and conclusion.  
3 marks

**INTRODUCTION** – Relevant background information, definition of key terms, description of relevant prior research and aim are all identified. Research hypothesis is clear, and concise, with independent and dependent variables identified.
The report should begin with general information on the topic of interest. The introduction should then begin to ‘funnel’ down into the topic of interest and the past research on this topic. This will then give rise to a statement of the aim and hypothesis.

*A sample introduction is as follows:*

> The cerebral cortex is a structure of the brain responsible for a range of functions, including language, higher order mental processes, memory, motor control and sensory processing. The cortex is divided into four lobes, with each lobe specialising in particular functions. As one of the major roles of the nervous system is to detect and respond to environmental stimuli, there has been significant interest in understanding the functions associated with motor and sensory processing.

> Motor and sensory processing takes place in the frontal and parietal lobes respectively. Within each of these lobes, primary areas are responsible for interpreting and responding to this neural information.

> In the parietal lobe, the primary area is called the somatosensory cortex, and the specific role of this structure is to receive and process sensory information from the skin and body, enabling the perception of bodily sensations relating to touch, pressure, temperature and pain (Grivas & Letch, 2013). The organisation of this brain region is such that the amount of space dedicated to each body part indicates the sensitivity of this area, due to the density of the nerve endings and neural structures in these areas. This has been demonstrated in research conducted by Thompson (2000) and Gazzaniga & Heatherton (2006).
Aim: Specific to the student’s investigation. It must be one sentence and include the independent and dependent variables.

Hypothesis: A full research hypothesis (stating the target population) is required here for students to be awarded full marks. This must be one sentence in length, be a comparative statement that predicts the differences expected between the control and experimental groups.

It is important that students provide operationalised IV’s and DV’s in the introduction.

METHOD – Participants, materials, procedure, experimental design and participant allocation are all identified. The research and data collection methods are appropriate to the investigation and described accurately with sufficient detail to enable replication. The relevant ethical principles are explained in detail and the steps taken to fulfil the requirements of ethical psychological research are comprehensive.

Participants: Ensure precise indication of participant population, number, age and gender. Describe the sampling procedure used.

Preferred sampling types:
- Random sampling is a necessary factor of psychological research where every member of a research population has an equal chance of being selected as part of the sample. No bias is introduced to the selection process.
- Stratified sampling is a sampling process whereby the researcher ensures that the sample contains the same proportions of participants that are found in the research population. It involves dividing the population to be sampled into distinct strata or sub-groups.

Materials: List the materials and apparatus used in the experiment. 
*Note: It is not necessary to write pens, tables, chairs etc. in the materials section.*

Procedure: Provide a step-by-step description of how the experiment was carried out. Include the allocation process. State the steps taken to fulfil the requirements of ethical psychological research. As in all experiments the researcher may be in a position to cause harm to the participants. As always, the Code of Ethics applies and researchers must ensure that the design of the study will in no way cause any harm, either physical or psychological, to the participants.
RESULTS – Appropriately labelled and titled tables and graphs are used. Statistical analysis is completed if relevant. Description but not interpretation of results is provided. Data display and analyses are appropriate, detailed, accurate and clear.

Student should provide appropriately labelled titles and graphs to summarise and organise the data. This includes clearly labelled $x$ and $y$-axes, ensuring that the independent variable is assigned to the $x$-axis and the dependent variable to the $y$-axis. Titles should be located above tables and below graphs, as per APA guidelines for the writing of psychological reports.

A description of the results should be included in this section. This aims to provide a description of the results, and should not involve interpretation, which could indicate if the hypothesis was supported / not supported.

4 marks

DISCUSSION – The conclusions and findings of the research are accurate, detailed, coherent and show evidence of an appreciation of the place of research in the development of understandings in Psychology. A statement, indicating if the hypothesis is supported or refuted, is provided. Relevance to previous studies, generalisations, confounding variables and suggestions for future research are provided.

Students should address each of the following in order to present an appropriate discussion:

- State whether the hypotheses were supported or rejected.
- Discuss the statement of support / non-support with reference to the results. This involves interpretation of the results, including a comment on statistical significance (if this was provided to students)
- Identify any confounding variables and make suggestions on how these could be controlled in future research. These could be situational, participant or experimenter based variables. It is important that these variables are relevant to the nature of the experiment and are variables that would have an effect on the dependent variable and impact on the ability to draw causal inferences about the IV-DV relationship.
- Provide a statement of the conclusions and findings of the investigation. It is important that students link the results to findings in previous studies as discussed in the introduction.
- Make recommendations for future research on the topic.
- State if it is possible to make any generalisations of the results to the wider population. This will depend on if true random sampling was used and if the results were statistically significant.

6 marks

REFERENCES – citing of all references using the APA system of citations and referencing. Any reference material must be cited. Students should be using at least 3 references for this study.

2 marks

APPENDICES – any relevant material such as data sheets and stimuli are attached.

2 marks

GRAMMAR - The report must include correct grammar, spelling, paragraphing and report structure, and be written coherently.

3 marks