Writing Skills for Psychologists

Why are writing skills important?

1. Surveys of UK employers suggest that writing ability is one of the qualities most sought after in graduate employees (Bulmer et al, 1994).

2. Just as clear thinking leads to clear writing, by forcing yourself to write your ideas down in simple, unambiguous text, you will find you understand (and remember) things much more clearly.

3. The better your writing skills, the better your degree classification:

> The majority of marks which contribute to your degree classification will come from exam essays or other written work (assessed essays, third year project).

- This education is costing you, so get your money's worth.

What students want help with

Style conventions in scientific writing	(1)	76.6%
Lab report writing skills	(2)	70.2%
Thinking skills	(2)	70.2%
How to reference properly	(3)	59.6%
Presentation skills	(4)	55.3%
How to revise your written work effectively	(5)	51.1%
Learning / Research skills	(6)	48.9%
Essay writing skills	(7)	44.7%
Basic writing skills	(8)	12.8%

Unfortunately, you need to get to grips with (8) before you can truly master (1)….

Writing Skills for Psychologists

Factors which contribute to your written work's grade include

(1) Your general writing skills. (How to write)
(2) Your understanding of what is required of an undergraduate essay / lab report / presentation. (Why to write)
(3) Your understanding of the topic. (What to write)

This lecture will focus on 1 and 2. HOWEVER improving 1&2 will inevitably lead to improvements in 3!

The following factors are equally important, and are down to you.

1. How interested you are in the topic.
2. The importance you attach to receiving a high grade for a particular piece of work.
3. The amount of effort you are prepared to make given other academic commitments.

Writing Skills for Psychologists

Why writing skills are important: - For faculty too…..

We are trying to teach you how to “do science”.

Science progresses by researchers testing hypotheses experimentally, and then publishing a written account of their rationale, procedures, findings, and interpretations.

All faculty in EP are “research active” - we write papers which are published in academic journals.

This involves a peer review process:

It is not just *your* writing which is being assessed -

Writing Skills for Psychologists

The peer review process:

Papers submitted to journals are sent out by the journal editor to ~3 anonymous referees (academics who do similar research)

These reviewers provide detailed feedback on the submitted paper.

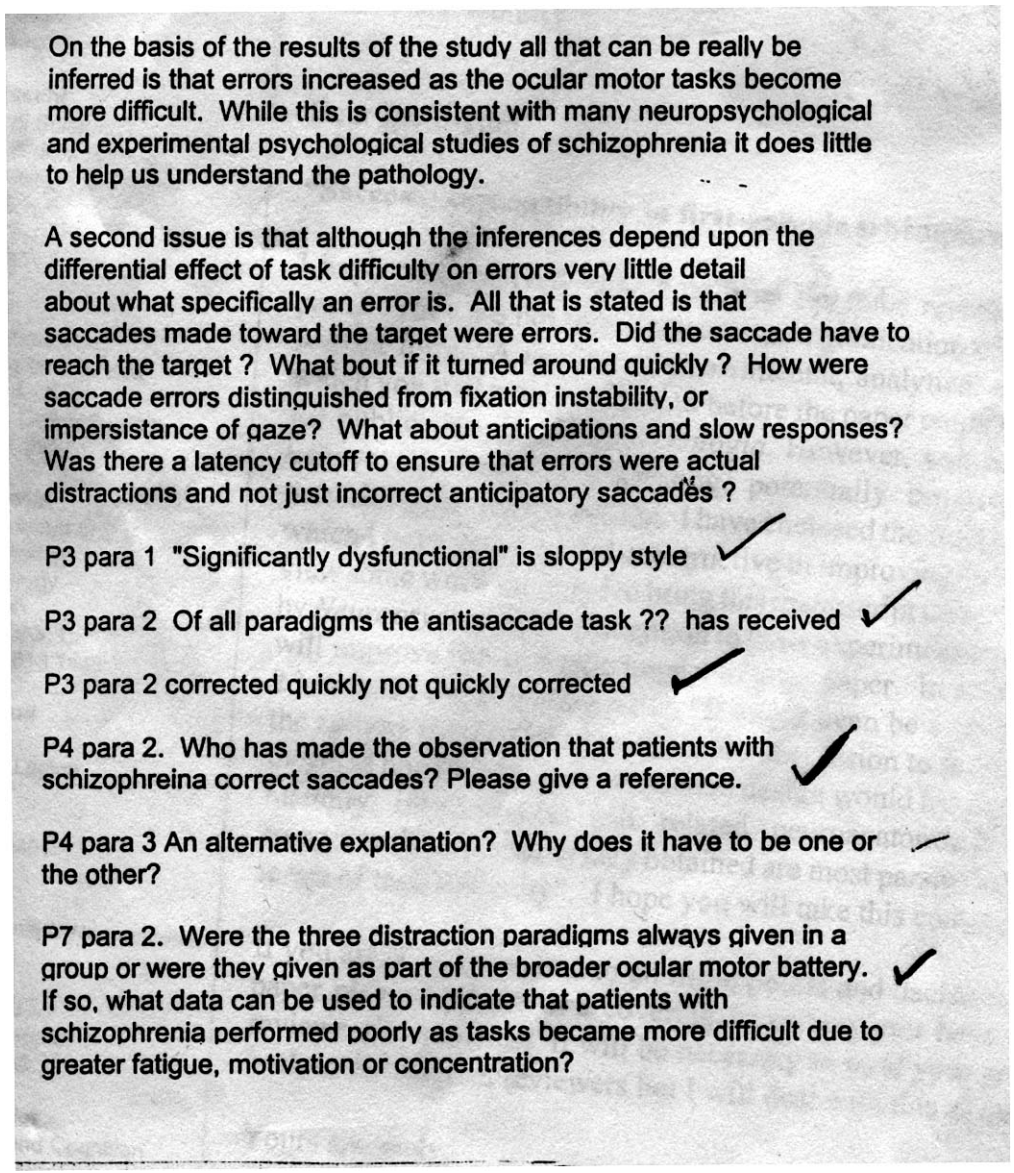
THIS FEEDBACK INCLUDES GENERAL COMMENTS ON THE WRITING AS WELL AS THE QUALITY OF THE SCIENCE

On the basis of these reviews, the editor either

1. Accepts
2. Accepts subject to minor revisions
3. Accepts subject to major revisions (and often re-review)
4. Rejects

Whatever the decision, you receive the reviewers comments.

A reviewer's comments on one of my own efforts…



On the basis of the results of the study all that can be really be inferred is that errors increased as the ocular motor tasks become more difficult. While this is consistent with many neuropsychological and experimental psychological studies of schizophrenia it does little to help us understand the pathology.

A second issue is that although the inferences depend upon the differential effect of task difficulty on errors very little detail about what specifically an error is. All that is stated is that saccades made toward the target were errors. Did the saccade have to reach the target ? What bout if it turned around quickly ? How were saccade errors distinguished from fixation instability, or impersistance of gaze? What about anticipations and slow responses? Was there a latency cutoff to ensure that errors were actual distractions and not just incorrect anticipatory saccades ?

P3 para 1 "Significantly dysfunctional" is sloppy style

P3 para 2 Of all paradigms the antisaccade task ?? has received

P3 para 2 corrected quickly not quickly corrected

P4 para 2. Who has made the observation that patients with schizophreina correct saccades? Please give a reference.

P4 para 3 An alternative explanation? Why does it have to be one or the other?

P7 para 2. Were the three distraction paradigms always given in a group or were they given as part of the broader ocular motor battery. If so, what data can be used to indicate that patients with schizophrenia performed poorly as tasks became more difficult due to greater fatigue, motivation or concentration?

The study's findings are not as interesting as you think

You have failed to adequately define one of the key concepts in your research

Your writing skills need improving

You have failed to back up your claims with evidence

You have not given this enough thought

You need to clarify your methodology

Writing a Psychology Essay

What are we looking for in a good degree level essay?

Research suggests that one reason for poor essay grades is a lack of understanding about what is required in an undergraduate essay (Campbell et al, 1998).

One important distinction is between knowledge telling and knowledge transformation. (Description and Evaluation)

Many weak undergraduate essays are simply summaries of the relevant chapter in the course text book.

Other “knowledge telling” essays are basically long lists of quotes strung together.

We need to see that you have understood and thought about the material.

Writing a Psychology Essay

What are we looking for in a good degree level essay?

1. Some arguments

These need to be well structured (tell a story).
Most points you make will probably not be novel.
But try to express your own (supported) ideas as well.
Avoid unsupported opinion.

2. Evidence to support your arguments:

This will usually involve describing the relevant experimental data.

Several studies have shown significant correlations between essay grade and number of citations!

Writing a Psychology Essay

What are we looking for in a good degree level essay?

3. Critical evaluation

A good answer to most psychology essay questions will involve a critical evaluation of arguments and evidence.

Critical evaluation involves “a complex weighting of evidence and analysis of alternative theoretical perspectives in order to evaluate the logical coherence of particular positions…”

This takes practice, but is very important.

Writing a Psychology Essay

How long should it take? (How long is a piece of string…)

Most studies find only a weak association between time spent and mark received (e.g Norton, 1990; Torrance et al, 2000)

Based entirely on personal experience, and for purely illustrative purposes…

Research:	A few hours in the library
Reading / Notes:	An afternoon / evening
Planning / Writing:	Two evenings
Cooling off:	At least 24 hours
Revision:	An afternoon / evening

More important is that you MANAGE YOUR TIME: E.g. trying to get the relevant book out of the library two days before the deadline will be impossible. Also, beware multiple deadlines.

Writing a Psychology Essay

What makes a good essay?

Campbell et al (1998): Study based on a detailed analysis of 46 UG psychology essays: Students who wrote better essays:

> "…engaged in processes of reconstruction rather than "knowledge telling", put more effort into finding references, used organisational systems for integrating their notes according to topics or themes, built "arguments" rather than "information" when structuring and drafting their essays, were concerned with improving ideas and arguments as well as mechanics when revising their essays, had a more sophisticated understanding of the assessment criteria, and expected and received higher grades."

So: Do lots of reading, organise your thoughts, create an argument, and revise your work for both content and style.

Writing a Psychology Essay

A structured approach to essay writing:

- Research
  - Interpretation of Question
  - Finding relevant information
  - Reading it / Making notes
- Planning
  - Noting your thoughts
  - Organising them into a coherent structure
- Writing
  - Should be easy(ish) if you've done the above!
- Revision
  - Revising for content
  - Revising for style

This does not mean that a linear progression through these stages is necessarily the most appropriate strategy for you

Writing a Psychology Essay

Research: Interpreting the Question

Do NOT assume that any essay question can be reinterpreted as “Write down everything you know about topic X, based on your lecture notes and a chapter in the course text book”

These essays are common, and do not get high grades

Identify the “process words” and “content words”, and make sure they dictate the content and structure of your essay.

e.g. “Describe and explain the importance of infants' learning capacities?”

Process / Content

Many psychology essays are simply questions:
SO: Rewrite the title in your mind to include the words “critically evaluate” and “with reference to specific examples”

Writing a Psychology Essay

Research: Interpreting the Question

Make sure that you answer the question: ranked most important in a list things tutors look for when marking essays (Norton,1990).

But don't take this too literally:

e.g. "What are the philosophical assumptions of behavioural therapy?

A BAD answer would just list some assumptions- it answers the question, but is not going to get a high grade.

A GOOD answer might critically evaluate assumptions underlying concepts such as conditioning, reinforcement etc, and discuss evidence for their relevance in models of behavioural therapy.

Writing a Psychology Essay

Research: Doing the reading

1. Read the set readings!

2. Try to formulate a rough essay plan, and use this to guide further reading.

3. Get a feel for who the “key players” are

4. Have any of them written a book or review article on the topic which is not on your list? (use Pubmed / WoS etc to find out)

5. Type the essay’s title into google and see what’s out there (your tutors will do this too, so don’t plagiarise).

6. Use a bibliographic database (e.g. Wos / Pubmed) and type the content words in.

7. Discuss the essay with someone else who is writing it.

Writing a Psychology Essay

Planning / Organising

If you plan well, the writing should not be too difficult

Let the content words of the title guide your plan.

Some people find spidergrams / patterned plans / brainstorming useful.

Once you have generated a fairly exhaustive list of ideas, organise the good ones into a logical and coherent structure.

If you are a “think then do” person - try to write an outline or “table of contents” after you have written the essay - to check that the structure is OK.

Writing a Psychology Essay

Introductions: Why a good introduction matters - anchoring and adjustment biases (Khaneman & Tversky).

Students given 5 seconds to estimate answers to following:

8 x 7 x 6 x 5 x 4 x 3 x 2 x 1 (Descending)
1 x 2 x 3 x 4 x 5 x 6 x 7 x 8 (Ascending)

Median estimates:
Ascending: 512
Descending: 2250 (Actual answer 40320).

DIFFERENT STARTING POINTS YIELD DIFFERENT ESTIMATES (PEOPLE FAIL TO ADEQUATELY ADJUST)

No matter how sophisticated our reasoning processes, most essay markers will have formed a fairly good idea of your grade after reading the first one or two paragraphs.

Writing a Psychology Essay

Introductions: anchoring and adustment biases

SO:

An essay that starts of poorly will have to work hard to get the marker to adequately adjust their initial impression (and grade) upwards.

WHEREAS

An essay with a blindingly brilliant introduction may be "forgiven" the odd weakness later on.

More generally, a well articulated introduction will help re-orient the reader if they lose the thread of your argument.

Writing a Psychology Essay

Writing: Introductions

There is no single “right” way to write an introduction.

For a 1500 word essay, it is very important that the introduction is concise and highly focussed.

100-200 words should be enough.

It needs to

1. Identify the subject of the essay and define the key terms
2. Highlight the major issues which “lie behind” the question
3. “Signpost” the essay’s key argument, (and, if possible, how this argument is structured).

Good introductions take practice, and are often best written after the main body of the essay.

Writing a Psychology Essay

Writing: Conclusions

- Don’t just stop!
- A good conclusion will be ringing in your tutors ears as they decide what grade you receive...
- Do not introduce new arguments in the conclusion
  - (especially if they are the arguments you should have been making in the body of the essay…)
- Summarise your main points
- Restate how they answer the question
- Possibly suggest ideas that future research might address
- Try not to “sit on the fence”.

Do not conclude with “clearly more research needs to be done in this area”
Give some indication as to what that research might be!

Writing a Psychology Essay

Revising your work:

"I believe more in the scissors than I do in the pencil": Truman Capote

"The first draft of anything is shit": Ernest Hemingway

Academics revise their papers many times before submission to a journal.

My last submission went through 8 major rewrites, and countless minor revisions, over a period of about 6 months!

It is very easy to lose marks through simple errors which even a cursory read through would have picked up.

How you revised your essays

Checked spelling	(1)	83.0%
Checked grammar	(1)	83.0%
Rewrote sentences	(2)	72.3%
Cut text	(3)	46.8%
Rearranged paragraphs	(4)	44.7%
Added new paragraphs / sections	(5)	36.2%
Rewrote whole paragraphs / sections	(6)	12.8%

Unfortunately, it’s the last five that actually make the most difference.

Cutting text is particularly important.

Writing a Psychology Essay

Revising your work:

- It is not the number of revisions that is important, but the way in which you revise the essay.
- Try to leave at least one night between completing a draft and attempting to revise it.
- You need to revise content, structure and style
- Use a “revision checklist”
- Get a friend to read the essay and ask them for detailed comments.
- You can never have too much criticism.

Writing a Psychology Essay

Revising the first draft:

This involves more than clicking on the spell-checker!

Revising for structure / content: Reread the essay and ask yourself:

1. Is the essay's structure obvious?
   - Does the introduction do its job?
   - Is the material organised logically?
   - Does each paragraph make a single point?
   - Are your transitions effective?
   - Does the conclusion work?

2. Are your arguments relevant?
   - Are they well developed, balanced and clearly articulated?
   - Do they cover all the relevant issues raised by the question?

3. Are they supported by relevant evidence?
   - Is the evidence reviewed critically?

Writing a Psychology Essay

Revising the first draft:

Revising for style: This could be whole series of lectures…

> "Vigorous writing is concise. A sentence should contain no unnecessary words, a paragraph no unnecessary sentences…" William Strunk Jr.

"Revising for Style" Handout provides lots more detail.

Some key points are:

1. Write for an intelligent, literate **novice**.
2. Try to keep sentences short. Follow the odd long sentence with one or two short concluding sentences
3. One "main point" per paragraph in main body of essay
4. Avoid using cliches / generalities / "flowery" writing
5. Equally, avoid trying to sound "scientific" by using complicated words
6. Cut out all redundant words, sentences, paragraphs and sections
7. Use the active voice (unless the action is more important than the actor).

Scientific Writing

Good scientific writing should be

Clear
Concise
Compelling

Read as many journal articles as you can - particularly “high impact” journals such as Nature and Science

Outline

1. Scientific thinking / reasoning
2. Writing clearly
3. Writing concisely
4. Referencing

Critical Thinking

Most science writing involves a logical and rational evaluation of research evidence, and the arguments it is being used to support.

This involves considering the strengths and weaknesses of both the evidence and the argument.

Critical thinking needs to become a way of life for you...

To think critically you must be

1. Sceptical -
Assume nothing. Question everything.

2. Objective -
Judge only against scientific criteria - set aside personal views

3. Open-minded -
Consider all sides of an argument, seek alternative explanations

Critically Evaluating Research

Key steps:

1. Identify the source
2. Analyse the arguments
3. Examine the methodology
4. Evaluate the results
5. Analyse the conclusions and interpretations

1. Identify the source: Where / When was it published?

Place greater value on research published in peer reviewed journals, than on info sourced from the web / newspapers etc.

Not all journals are equally “esteemed”.

More recent research is likely to supercede / modify older research, but older research often needs to be read in order to interpret more recent research.

Critically Evaluating Research

2. Analyse the arguments:

A) Are the arguments based on a theory?
B) Have alternative arguments been addressed?
C) Are the concepts and terms of the argument defined clearly?
D) Are the hypotheses appropriate / logical?
E) Does the evidence support the argument?

Common weaknesses to look out for:

1) Material Fallacies

Circular reasoning
Insufficient or suppressed evidence

2) Fallacies of Relevance

Appeals to authority / popularity
Non-sequitur

Critically Evaluating Research

3: Examine the research methodology:

A) Are the participants representative? Are they well matched?
B) Is the sample size appropriate?
C) Is the design appropriate?
(e.g. how well have extraneous variables been controlled)
D) Is there evidence of reliability and validity of measures taken?
E) Are the techniques adequate / accurate / objective?
F) How ecologically valid is the method?

Above all try to think what might have been done to improve the methodology (often the authors themselves will acknowledge some weaknesses in the final paragraphs, but try to think beyond these).

Often the “definitive” methodology will not be possible due to ethical or practical reasons - but consider how close the paper gets...

Critically Evaluating Research

4: Evaluate the results:

A) Are the statistics appropriate?
B) Are the results reliable? - Are they replicable?
C) Are the results presented clearly?
D) Do they support the hypotheses?
E) Have alternative explanations been explored / ruled out?

This will become easier as you learn more about research methods and read more research.

Unfortunately many of the best papers often use highly complex and sometimes obscure statistics

Even so, in a well written paper you should be able to appreciate the rationale for why a certain approach was taken for the analysis, and what its advantages are over other possible approaches.

Critically Evaluating Research

5: Analyse the conclusions and implications:

A) Are the conclusions logical given the evidence?
E.g. is causation established? Is the reasoning circular?

B) Is the discussion overly speculative?
How much of the discussion is actually supported directly by the results?
Strong claims require strong results.

C) How important are the findings?
Do they break new ground, suggest a new framework for future research, challenge previous theories or simply add further weight to an existing theory?
Do the findings have any broader impact (societal / emotional / practical etc)

D) Have alternative explanations been explored?

E) Is the discussion simply a restatement of the results?

Again, these skills only improve with practice and exposure.

Critically Evaluating Research

Assessing Impact

Tulving & Madigan (1970): ~60% of published papers are “utterly inconsequential”. ~10% were “worthwhile”.

Typical key results of unimportant papers:

a) Variable X has an effect of variable Y
b) Our findings are not entirely inconsistent with theory ABC
c) Our findings suggest a need for a modification in ABC theory (but give now indication how)
d) Our findings suggest that the processes under study are extremely complex and we don’t really understand them yet
e) The experiment clearly demonstrates the need for more research on this problem
f) The experiment shows that the methodological approach is useful for doing experiments of this type
g) Our results do not support the hypothesis, but the experiment now appears to have been an inadequate test of it…

Important papers: “clarified existing problems, opened up new areas for investigation and provided titillating glimpses into the unknown”

Critically Evaluating Research

Eight Standards for Asssessing the Contribution to Knowledge of Psychology Papers (Sternberg, 1993)

1) The paper contains one or more surprising results that nevertheless make sense in some theoretical context.

2) The results presented in the paper are of a major theoretical or practical significance.

3) The ideas in the paper are new - perhaps a new way of looking at an old problem.

4) The interpretation of results appears unambiguous.

5) The paper intergrates into a new, simpler framework data which previously required a complex, possibly unwieldy framework.

6) The paper contains a major debunking of previously held ideas.

7) The paper presents an experiment with a particularly clever paradigm or experimental manipulation.

8) The findings or theory presented in the paper are general ones.

Writing Clearly

Writing clear paragraphs:

- Make the paragraph your basic “unit of sense” - each paragraph should deal with a single topic or make a single point.

- Try to start each paragraph with a sentence that suggests its topic / point.

- Use transitional devices to make the paragraphs role in the structure of your essay clear.

- E.g. “More recent accounts suggest that….. Mayes and Meudel (1980) tested this by….”

- There are lots of excellent lists of transitional devises on the web e.g.

http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/general/gl_transition.html

Writing Clearly

Writing clear sentences: General

Remove overlong sentences:

Most spell-checkers will pick these up automatically, and they are usually easily changed into two or more simpler sentences.

Avoid comma splices / run-on sentences:

> The results were not significant, there were no gender effects.
> This argument is not compelling there is not much evidence for it.

These can often be solved by changing into two sentences, or the appropriate use of conjunction words like *and, as, so, but, for, not, yet*.

Make comparisons explicit:

> Males performed better in condition A.

Than females or than in condition B???

Writing Clearly

Writing clear sentences: Avoid the passive voice

Sentences can be active:

I wrote the sentence

or passive:

The sentence was written by me

IN SCIENCE WRITING THE ACTIVE VOICE IS NEARLY ALWAYS PREFERRED

- It is nearly always shorter, clearer and more direct.

- Grammar checkers will pick up passive sentences - use this feature and try rewriting the sentence in the active voice.

- Passive constructions are appropriate when what was done is more important than who did it / how it was done.

- They are also appropriate in the methods section where they help avoid the use of “I”

Writing Clearly

Writing clear sentences: Pronouns
(I, we, he, she, they, it, this, that, those, these, them, which)

Pronouns can cause all sorts of problems. These are the most common

1. More than one eligible pronoun:

The main problem students have with pronouns is that *they*…

Does they refer to students or pronouns?

Ambiguous pronouns are common in methods sections.

Whilst reassuring the subject, the experimenter injected the solution into *his* arm.

his technically refers to the experimenter

Although the noise masked the stimulus, *it* was not obscured.

Was the noise or the stimulus obscured?

The solution is usually to restore, or create the noun to which the pronoun refers. Often just starting the sentence again from scratch sounds better.

Writing Clearly

Writing clear sentences: Pronouns

2. Premature or distant pronouns:

If they are to be used in support of the argument for increased medication, the results must be published.

This kind of construction can be used for emphasis, but sentences are usually easier to read if the premature pronoun is removed.

Distant pronouns are separated from their referents by too many intervening clauses.

This theory, often criticised by researchers more recently, mainly due to problems with circularity, *which* used to dominate the field...

These kinds of problems are far easier for a disinterested friend to spot - try getting a non-psychology student to proof read your essay.

Ask them to paraphrase what they think you mean.

Writing Clearly

Writing clear sentences: Pronouns

3. Confusing use of relative pronouns (that, which)

Not everyone agrees with the following APA advice. I find it generally helps…

Which can be used in a restrictive or non-restrictive sense.

The animals which performed well in the first experiment did not do well in the second.

Which animals did well in the second experiment?

1) All of the animals (non restrictive)
or
2) Only the animals which performed well in the first experiment (restrictive)

When using which in a non-restrictive sense, set the clause in commas -

The animals, which performed well in the first experiment, did not do well in the second.

When using which in a restrictive sense, try replacing it with *that*

The animals that performed well in the first experiment did not do well in the second.

Writing Clearly

Writing clear sentences: Pronouns

4. The indefinite this.

Incredibly common in undergraduate essays.

> Although what the word *this* refers to is usually obvious to the writer, it is often not so obvious to the reader.

Do a word search for this, and make sure that you explicitly state what it refers to

This depends on…
Some support for this was provided
However, this is not clear from the results

This interpretation depends on
Some support for this hypothesis was provided
However, this pattern is not clear from the results

Again, getting a friend to proof-read your essay will increase your chances of spotting these errors.

Writing Clearly

General Advice:

1) Avoid Jargon / trying to sound clever by using long words:

The stimulus had superlative mnestic properties
This idea was of paramount importance

Whenever there are two alternative words, always use the simpler.

2) Avoid slang, colliquialisms and cliches :

The results kind of implied
There was loads wrong with this experiment
The test wasn't significant.

Clearly more research needs to be done
A detailed discussion would be beyond the scope of this essay

3) Try putting the most important information at the end of the sentence.

Writing Concisely

Cutting text, at the level of paragraphs, sentences and words, is probably the most beneficial thing you can do when revising your work.
Good science writing conveys the maximum amount of information with the minimum amount of obfuscation

Cut all of the following:

1) Superfluous nouns:

The manipulation facilitated the process of encoding

There was an increase in the number of errors.

2) Superfluous verbs:

Verbs like do, have, be and make are often used with the noun form of a perfectly good verb

do a study of

make changes in the

have a tendency to

3) Weak modifiers: Words like the following should be used sparingly, if at all.

Usually,	Somewhat,	Occasionally,	Fairly,	Pretty,	Really,
Quite,	Basically,	Sometimes,	Often,	Hopefully,	Rather
etc. etc.					

Citations and Referencing “APA Style”

In-text citations: APA uses Author-Date system

Citations usually work best at the end or beginning of sentences:

a) There is compelling evidence in support of this hypothesis (Renshaw, 2001).
b) Renshaw (2001) provided compelling evidence for this hypothesis.
c) Previous research (Renshaw, 2001) has provided compelling evidence for this hypothesis.

If the authors name forms part of the narrative only the year appears in brackets.

In a more recent study (Jones & Morris, 1998) this key finding was not replicated.
In a more recent study Jones and Morris (1998) failed to replicate this key finding.

Use “&” when the citation is within brackets.
Use “and” when the names form part of the narrative.

Citations and Referencing “APA Style”

Two to five authors: Cite all authors the first time, abbreviate to first author and et al. subsequently.

a) There is compelling evidence in support of this hypothesis (Renshaw, Huxton, Filbert & Jones 2001).
b) Renshaw, Huxton, Filbert and Jones (2001) provided compelling evidence for this hypothesis.
c) Previous research (Renshaw, Huxton, Filbert & Jones, 2001) has provided compelling evidence for this hypothesis.

Use “&” when the citation is within brackets.
Use “and” when the names form part of the narrative.

Six or more authors: Abbreviate to first author et al. for first and subsequent citations. Provide complete author list in references!

Citations and Referencing “APA Style”

Citing the same work within a paragraph: Omit the date from subsequent citations within the same paragraph:

The results of an earlier study (Renshaw and Huxton, 2002) contradict those of Mandler et al. (1998). Renshaw and Huxton compared the performance…..

*Multiple citations: list in alphabetical order, use a semicolon to separate works cited.

Past research (Benton et al, 2002; Jones & Collins, 1996; Stark, Whittle & Smith, 1988) has…

*Multiple citations from same authors: list authors name, and years of publication in chronological order.

Previous research (Jones, 1972, 1984, 1988a, 1988b, 2002) has confirmed…

The a and b are assigned according to the alphabetical order of the first main word of the titles…

*Neither of these should occur too often in undergraduate essays.

Citations and Referencing “APA Style”

Using quotations:
These should be avoided whenever possible.
Use only when they cannot be easily rephrased, or if the quotation is widely known. (If it is widely known, it is probably a cliché, so avoid it anyway!)

Short quotations (<40 words) should be placed in quotation marks within the body of the text, and end with the page number

Hutton et al. (1998) specifically stated that “this effect should not occur with unmedicated patients” (p. 12).

Long quotations (>40 words) should be blocked and indented. No quotation marks are used.

Richardson (1969) famously described imagery as:

> The common and relatively familiar imagery of everyday life. It may accompany the recall of events from the past, the ongoing thought processes of the present or the anticipatory actions and events of the future. (p. 43)

Citations and Referencing “APA Style”

Citing a secondary source: If you have not read the primary source, but just read about it in another work, you must cite both.

This has also been found in schizophrenic patients (Ray, Charles & Foxton, 1999, as cited in Hall & Field, 2001).

Include only the secondary source in the reference list!!!

In the first year it is likely that many of the experiments you cite will be from secondary sources.

Citing papers as primary sources, when you have not actually read them is a VERY BAD THING (and quite easy to spot).

(Academics do it too…)

Citations and Referencing - Misc

DO NOT CITE LECTURERS / HANDOUTS / LECTURE NOTES IN YOUR ESSAYS!!!!

What you were told in a lecture was simply one person's opinion. It does not count as evidence - it could be completely wrong for a start! It is not science.

Use citations to support your argument - e.g. refer to an actual experiment that provided evidence either for or against it.

Revision / Exams

- All assessment systems create pressures for students.

- Many different modes of assessment, but traditional “unseen” still dominant.
- Unseen Exams: Fair and impartial; plagiarism very difficult; established marking system; finite amount of assessment - you are NOT being assessed most of the time; allows courses to “build”.
- No amount of revision / exam taking hints will make up for not going to lectures / tutorials and working during the term.

Revision / Exams

- Get hold of past papers
  - How long is the exam?
  - What kind of questions are asked? - Single issue / cross topic / descriptive etc
  - Is there usually a “question of last resort”?
  - What topics appear most often?

- Do the questions / exam structure map onto the course?
- Are new topics introduced?

- Is the whole course covered?

Revision / Exams

- The guessing game…
  - How much to revise?
  - Impossible to answer…

  - It is an individual choice - essentially governed by your willingness to take risks.
  - Careful study of past papers can help reduce the risk.

Revision / Exams

- Some very general tips:
  - Ask lecturers what kind of answers they are looking for in exams (will you be expected to know names / dates of references for example?)
  - Start revision early, build in breaks
  - Revise with friends
  - Use multimodal techniques - make your revision notes visually memorable
    - Use coloured pens / highlighers / paper
    - Make lists / tables / mind-maps
    - Draw diagrams / sketches
  - Practice visualising your materials
  - Say key words out loud / put them to music!
  - Make “neat” copies of your materials
  - Don’t concentrate on stuff you’re good at.

Exams - on the day...

- Set your alarm...
- Leave enough time to get there
- Eat something
- Try to avoid caffeine / nicotine - they increase anxiety
- Last minute cramming can be counter-productive - concentrate on what you know.
- Avoid people who might stress you
- Read the questions
- Answer all questions - allocate time strategically
- Try to keep answer relevant to questions
- If you start to panic try visualisation exercises / deep breathing.

- Treat yourself when its all over!

Happy Writing!!!