

# Writing A Methods Section

## OUTLINE AND EXPLANATION

A methods section should allow a reader to understand how you conducted your experiment.

### Important Concepts to Address in Your Methods Section

1. The type of study (experimental, observational, cross-sectional, longitudinal, diary study, etc)
2. Variables (independent and dependent, between-subjects or within-subjects)
  - a. Independent variables are *manipulated*
  - b. Dependent variables are what is *hypothesized* to be influenced by the independent variables
  - c. Between-subjects designs are when each subject is only exposed to a single condition or type of variable
  - d. Within-subjects designs are when each subject experiences multiple conditions
3. Controls (How did you ensure you were only measuring the effects of certain variables?)
4. Demographic of your participants
5. How participants were recruited; inclusion criteria
6. Spurious variables (variables that introduce bias or randomness in the data)
  - a. Ex. The time of day when measurements are made
7. Confounding variables (variables that co-vary with the independent variables)
  - a. Ex. You want to determine which of two drugs are effective, but they are being administered in different settings