

Writing Short Written Responses

Introduction: Short Written Responses (SWR) are highly focused and brief answers (~250 words) to specific prompts. The key success while writing SWRs is to clearly answer the prompt using evidence from research studies.

Prompts: SWR prompts will ask you to demonstrate your knowledge and comprehension of key concepts from this course. Because of that, the command terms will be Level 1 and 2 commands.

- *Explain one study related to localization of function in the brain.*
- *Outline one theory of how emotion may impact a cognitive process.*
- *Describe one theory or study on the formation on stereotypes.*

Keys to Success:

1. Understand the command term and break down the prompt.
 - Explain: Give a detailed account including reasons and causes.
 - One
 - Localization of Function: Specific areas of the brain are responsible for particular behaviors and functions.
2. Know details of studies which help you answer your prompt
 - Dimasio et al (1994): Phineas Gage and the Frontal Lobe
 - Corkin et al (1997): HM and the Hippocampus
 - Bremner et al. (2003): Hippocampus and memory
 - Aim, Method, Findings, Conclusions, Critical Thinking
3. Restate the essential of the prompt in the first line of your response.

“Dimasio et al (1994) is an example of localization of function because it shows how an injury to Phineas Gage’s frontal lobe led him to have difficulty demonstrating socially appropriate and responsible behavior in his life.”

4. *Effectively* answer the prompt in a *focused* manner. Hit the main ideas and leave the fluff out.

SWR General Outline

1. **Focused first sentence that answers the prompt.**
2. **Definition of Key Terms and Concepts**
3. **A summary of the key study that emphasizes how it helps answer the prompt.**

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Markband	Level Descriptor
0 (N/A-Beginning)	The answer does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.
Low (Nearly Meets) (1-3)	There is an attempt to answer the question, but knowledge and understanding is limited, often inaccurate, or of marginal relevance to the question.
Mid (Meets) (4-6)	The question is partially answered. Knowledge and understanding is accurate but limited. Either the command term is not effectively addressed or the response is not sufficiently explicit in answering the question.
High (Exceeds) (7-8)	The question is answered in a focused and effective manner and meets the demands of the command term. The response is supported by appropriate and accurate knowledge and understanding of research.

Sample Response:

Dimasio et al (1994) is an example of localization of function because it shows how an injury to Phineas Gage's frontal lobe led him to have difficulty demonstrating socially appropriate and responsible behavior in his life.

Localization of function is the understanding that different areas of the brain are responsible for particular types of behaviors and functions in the body. The frontal lobe is the area of the brain that is responsible for behaviors such as social judgments, planning, and higher order thinking.

Phineas Gage was a railroad worker who lived during the 19th century. While working, he suffered an accident in which a tampering rod was shot through his forehead. Amazingly, Gage survived but was recorded as having significant personality changes following his accident. These included difficulty understanding social cues, inappropriateness, a loss of self-control, and anger issues.

Dimasio aimed to determine what areas of Gage's brain were damaged and used MRI technology to create a model of the Gage's to accomplish this. Dimasio determined that the rod damaged only Gage's frontal lobe and left the remainder of his brain undamaged. The researchers were able to conclude that the frontal lobe is responsible for the human behavior such as self-control and long term planning. While Dimasio's study is limited because he was relying on notes from Gage's doctor and was not actually able to study Gage's actual brain firsthand, additional studies have shown that sociopaths show declined activity in their frontal lobes. Because sociopaths display similar behaviors as Gage, we can determine that Dimasio is correct in his hypothesis regarding the localization of function of the frontal lobe.