PSYCHOLOGY

Psychology
Observation Practical Workbook

Name ....

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Task 1: Writing research aims and questions

Write a research aim and question for each practical project. State whether the research question is descriptive, relational or causal. (You'll only have a hypothesis if you're conducting a controlled observation as part of an experiment).

Example **Practical 5:** mobile phone use	**Aim:**
	Question:

Practical 6: gender differences in driver behaviour	**Aim:**
	Question:

Task 2: Observation type

You have four decisions to make for each practical project. You need to decide if each will be structured or unstructured, naturalistic or controlled, participant or non-participant, and overt or covert. Justify each of your decisions by thinking about the strengths and weaknesses of each in relation to the practical projects (think PEC). Then you need to say how you plan to put each decision into practice. What are you actually going to do?

Example **Practical 5:** mobile phone use		
	Decision:	**Justification:**
Naturalistic or controlled?		
In practice:		

	Decision:	Justification:
Structured or unstructured?		

In practice:

	Decision:	Justification:
Participant or non-participant?		

In practice:

	Decision:	Justification:
Overt or covert?		

In practice:

Practical 6: gender differences in driver behaviour		
Naturalistic or controlled?	Decision:	Justification:

In practice:

	Decision:	**Justification:**
Structured or unstructured?		

In practice:

Participant or non-participant?	**Decision:**	**Justification:**

In Practice:

Overt or covert?	**Decision:**	**Justification:**

In practice:

Task 3: Selecting a sample (participants)

Decide who your population is going to be for each practical. Choose a sampling technique and say exactly how you're going to put that technique into practice. You'll need to state who, how, when and where you're going to obtain your sample. Remember, it MUST be replicable (that is, someone else could come along and do it).

Then write a strength and weakness of your sampling method and relate them to the practical. (Think: PEC.)

Practical 5:
mobile phone use

Population:	Sampling method:
In practice:	
Strength:	**Weakness:**

Practical 6: gender differences in driver behaviour	
Population:	**Sampling method:**
In practice:	
Strength:	**Weakness:**

Task 4: Behavioural checklist

First conduct an *ad lib* observation. Use this to help you create your list of behavioural categories. Remember to make them objective (no inferences), thorough (no 'waste basket') and discrete (ensure your categories don't overlap).

Practical 5: mobile phone use	
Category title	**Detailed description**

Practical 6: gender differences in driver behaviour	
Category title	**Detailed description**

Task 5: Sampling technique and data collection table
Now choose if you'll use event or time sampling (justify your choice in relation to your practical). Finally, create the table you'll use to collect your data and state the level of data you'll be collecting.

Practical 5: mobile phone use	
Sampling technique:	**Justification:**
Level of data:	
Data collection table:	

Practical 6:
gender differences in driver behaviour

Sampling technique:	Justification:

Level of data:

Data collection table:

Task 6:
Consider each practical and suggest how reliable and valid each one is. What would you do to improve the reliability and validity of your practical, or to measure how reliable and valid it is? Justify your answer.

Reliability	How reliable is each practical?
Internal reliability	**Practical 5:** mobile phone use
	Practical 6: gender differences in driver behaviour
External reliability	**Practical 5:** mobile phone use

	Practical 6: gender differences in driver behaviour
Validity	**How valid is each practical?**
Internal validity (face, content, criterion)	Practical 5: mobile phone use
	Practical 6: gender differences in driver behaviour
External validity (population, ecological)	Practical 5: mobile phone use
	Practical 6: gender differences in driver behaviour

Task 8: Ethics
For each of the following issues state how you'll ensure that each practical is ethical.

Practical 5: mobile phone use	
Issue	**Possible solutions**
Consent	
Deception	
Withdrawal	
Confidentiality	
Protection	

Practical 6: gender differences in driver behaviour	
Issue	**Possible solutions**
Consent	
Deception	
Withdrawal	
Confidentiality	
Protection	

Task 9: Conducting your practical

You're now at the stage where you can conduct your own practical. In discussion with your teacher choose either Practical five or Practical six. Conduct a pilot study to refine your behavioural categories and then create your data recording table**.** For *observations* it's important to check:
- that observers agree on operational definitions of behavioural categories,
- inter-observer reliability – do they need practice?
- that the behavioural categories include all the important behaviours,
- that the behavioural categories don't overlap,
- whether the participants are affected by the observers – should they be non-disclosed?

Gather any other materials you need. Be careful not to break any ethical guidelines. Good luck – your journey as a psychological researcher continues!

Task 10A: Descriptive statistics

Create a table to present your findings. Include the raw totals but also calculate them as percentage totals. You may also wish to present the data in the form of ratios. Identify the modal behaviour.
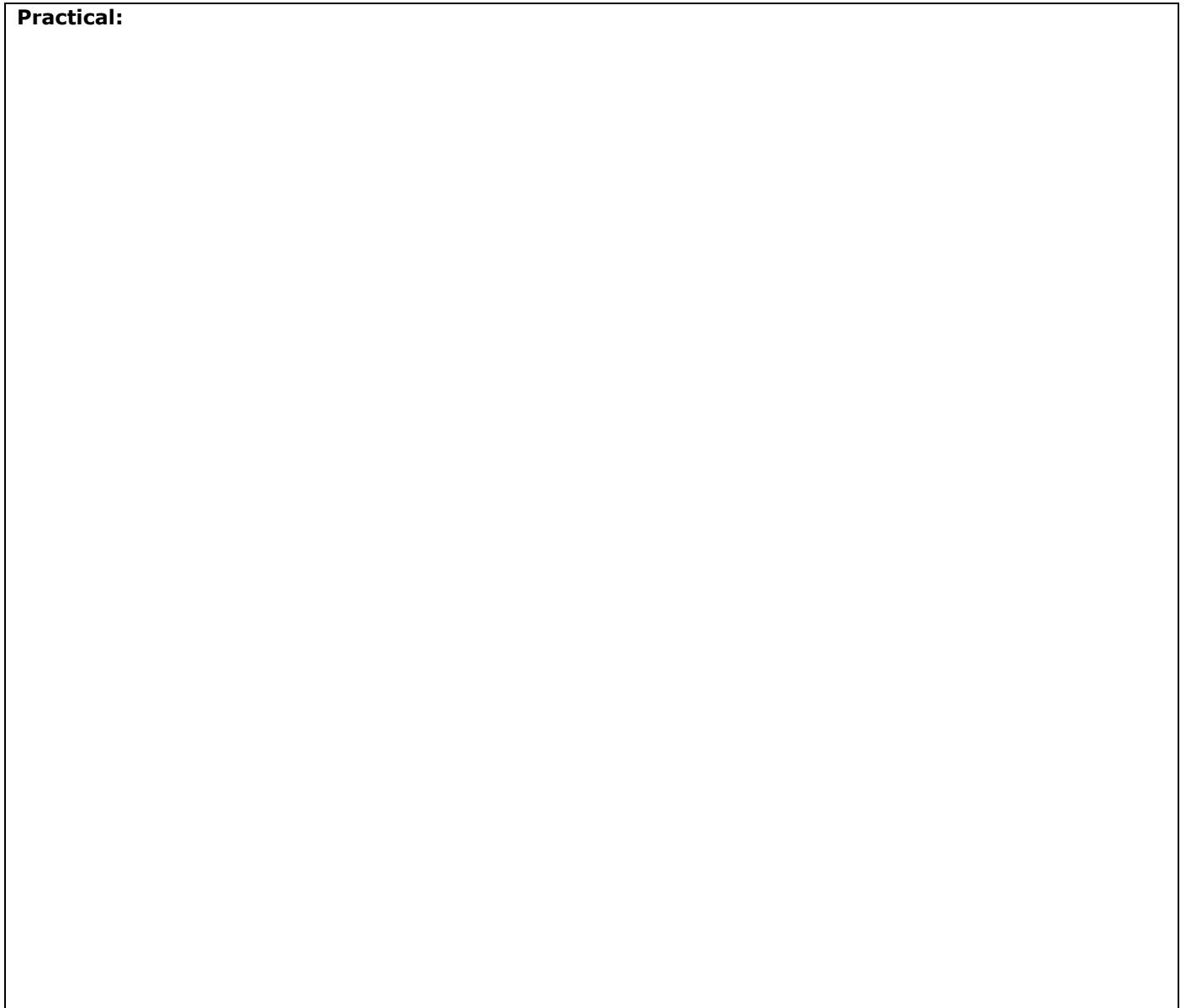
Practical:
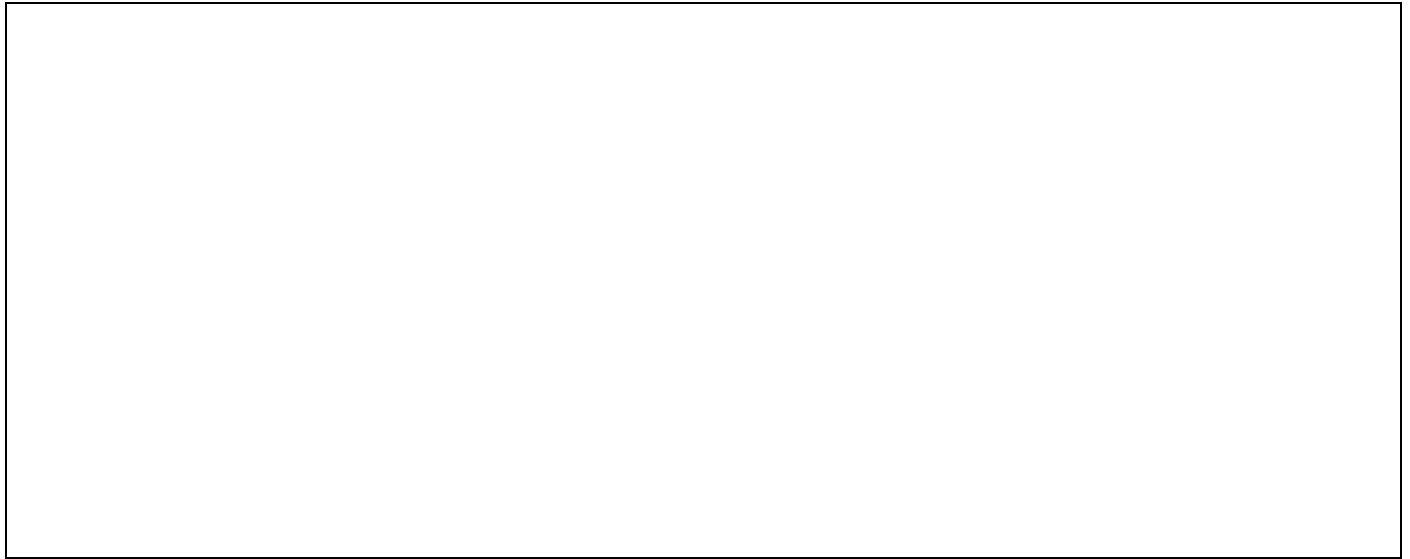
Task 10B: **Descriptive statistics – graphs**
Create a graph to present your data. Depending on your practical you may decide to have more than one graph. Ensure that each graph is relevant and adds to the information already presented. Check the labelling, there should be a title and each axis should be clearly marked.

Practical:

Task 11: Writing up your practical

There's step-by-step guidance as to how to write a research report in the Science and Psychology handout. But for even more information, check out this website from the University of Nottingham:

http://www.psychology.nottingham.ac.uk/staff/jas/yr1pracs/c81mprpracs.htm

In addition to this there's guidance on P-drive from the University of Essex.

Deadline: