Exercise walk-through

2.3
Report Writing Skills

GAC Social Science

Method — Key knowledge: findings report observations while discussion evaluates meaning and limits

An **abstract** briefly states a study's question, method, main result and important limit. **Findings** describe recorded observations. Discussion explains their possible meaning without disguising interpretation as measurement. **Limitations** show what the method cannot establish. Follow the actual report brief for structure, length and reference style. A presentation should keep the same evidence limits as the written report and invite useful questions.

Method — Source A: text or task brief

Fictional teacher-approved pilot: six labelled return bins were observed for five school days. Two were near a classroom, two near a stair landing and two near the canteen. Researchers counted incorrectly sorted items using the same written category guide once after lunch each day. Across the five days: classroom 8 errors in 80 checked items; stair landing 18 errors in 90 checked items; canteen 15 errors in 150 checked items. No names or photographs were collected. Bin labels were not changed and no intervention was tested.

A fictional planning manual by Chen (2025), page 4, recommends testing whether label wording is understandable. It does not report this school's data or prove that labels cause sorting errors. Treat this as a supplied practice source, not a real publication.

Method — Source B: response or review record

The report brief asks for question, method, findings, discussion, conclusion and references, followed by a short group presentation and audience questions. Draft findings: “Our new labels reduced errors by fifty percent.” Draft conclusion: “The canteen is worst because it has fifteen errors, so replace its bins tomorrow.” Draft reference: “Internet.” The team has not received permission to replace bins. For the presentation, Lin will explain the method, Mei will explain the table, and Rui will discuss limits and a proposed next study. One member has suggested omitting limits to sound certain.

Method — Worked example: compare rates and preserve the observation-only design

Known: classroom $8/80 = 10\%$, stair landing $18/90 = 20\%$, canteen $15/150 = 10\%$. Why compare rates? Checked totals differ. The stair landing has the highest recorded error rate, while classroom and canteen rates are equal. No changed-label or before/after observations exist, so the study cannot show a reduction caused by new labels. A next study is a proposal and needs approval.

Exercises 2.1·2.2

2.1 State the observation period and ONE detail that makes the counting method repeatable. [2]

2.2 Calculate the stair-landing error rate and identify its position relative to the other locations. [2]

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2.1

: five school days.: written category guide; same after-lunch timing; stated bin locations or labelled-bin identification, with explanation of consistent use.

2.2 Calculate the stair-landing error rate and identify its position relative to the other locations. [2]

2.2

: $18/90 \times 100 = 20\%$.: highest recorded rate; the classroom and canteen are each 10%.

Exercises 2.3·2.4

2.3 Give THREE reasons why the fifty-percent-reduction claim is unsupported. [3]

2.4 Correct the proposed canteen decision using comparison, permission and scope. [3]

Exercises 2.3·2.4

2.3 Give THREE reasons why the fifty-percent-reduction claim is unsupported. [3]

2.3

each: no labels were changed; no before/after or intervention comparison was made; recorded counts describe errors, not a measured reduction. Accept no matched baseline/control as an alternative distinct design limit, without double-counting absent comparison.

2.4 Correct the proposed canteen decision using comparison, permission and scope. [3]

2.4

: canteen's 15/150 is 10%, below stair landing's 20%; compare denominators rather than raw counts.: bin replacement is not approved.: five-day observation supports further investigation, not a guaranteed remedy or school-wide conclusion.

Exercise 3.1

3.1 Explain how the team should improve the report and presentation, using six specific points. [6]

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3.1

each: findings use the actual counts/rates; discussion retains scope and causal limits; conclude with a proposed approved follow-up; cite Chen (2025), page 4 for the label-testing recommendation rather than the invented reduction; give full supplied-source identifying details instead of Internet; maintain clear speaker handovers and invite audience questions without omitting limits.

Exercise 3.2

3.2 Write an 80–110-word abstract for this pilot that separates the findings from the proposed next action. [8]

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3.2

Local analytic rubric, 8 ×: state bounded question; identify five-day observation; describe consistent category counting; report 20% stair rate; report other two 10% rates; reject intervention/causal claim; acknowledge limited scope; label next study as approval-dependent; coherent truthful 80–110 word response. Example: “This pilot examined sorting errors at six school return bins over five days. Researchers used a written category guide to count items once after lunch without collecting names or photographs. Recorded error rates were ten percent near the classroom, twenty percent at the stair landing and ten percent near the canteen. The differing checked totals make rates more informative than raw error counts alone. These observations do not demonstrate an effect of label changes, because no intervention was tested. The findings concern the observed bins and period. A proposed follow-up could test label understanding after teacher approval.”