

Examples of research methods – taken from the “In Brief” section of the APA Monitor

Study	Name the research method – and explain your answer
<p><b>Taking a walk may lead to more creative thinking than sitting</b>, according to research at Stanford University. In one of several [studies], 48 college students sat alone in a small room at a desk facing a blank wall. When a researcher named an object, the student was asked to name alternative ways to use the object. For example, for the word "button," a person might say "as a doorknob on a dollhouse." The students heard several sets of words and were asked to name as many responses as possible. The participants then repeated the task with different words while walking on a treadmill facing a blank wall in the same room. They found that the students gave more creative responses when walking than when sitting.</p>	
<p><b>Young dads appear to be at high risk for depression</b>, according to research by scientists at Northwestern University. Using data collected from more than 10,000 young men over nearly 20 years, researchers found that depressive symptoms increased on average by 68 percent over the first five years of fatherhood. The men were about 25 years old on average when they became fathers and lived in the same homes as their children. Previous research has shown depressed dads use more corporal punishment, read less and interact less with their children, and are more likely to be stressed and neglect their children.</p>	
<p><b>Spending time online may ward off depression among retirees</b>, particularly among those who live alone, according to research conducted at Michigan State University. Scientists polled more than 12,000 Americans age 50 and older over four years, gathering data on regular Internet and email use and evaluating depression symptoms. They found that Internet use reduced the probability of depression by 33 percent, with the largest reduction occurring among participants who lived alone.</p>	
<p><b>People who are nervous about math tests may improve their scores by writing about their anxious thoughts before the test</b>, according to a study at the University of Chicago. Researchers randomly assigned 80 undergraduates either to write for seven minutes about their feelings about an upcoming math test or to sit quietly before taking the test. Participants who wrote about their feelings had similar test scores, regardless of whether they had reported high or low anxiety about math tests before the exam. Among participants who sat quietly, those who reported high math anxiety performed significantly worse than low-anxiety participants on difficult problems, while scores were similar for both groups on easy problems.</p>	
<p><b>People are more likely to deny the persistence of racism after being exposed to a successful African-American</b>, according to research conducted at the University of Chicago and the University of California, Berkeley. Across eight studies, scientists exposed participants to images of multiple successful people. Then, in what participants thought was an unrelated task, they answered questions about the state of race relations. Even when only one of the many images was of a successful African-American, such as President Barack Obama, the immediate conclusions participants drew about present-day racism were affected.</p>	
<p>Dr. P was a patient described by the neurologist Dr. Oliver Sacks. Dr. P. was a distinguished physician who began to show odd symptoms. He could not recognize familiar people or distinguish between people and things. For instance, while he and his wife were at the neurologist’s office, Dr. P. mistook his foot for his shoe. <b>When he rose to leave, he tried to lift off his wife’s head as if it were a hat and put it on his own head.</b> [Dr. Sacks used in-depth interviews with Dr. P. in doing this research to determine the cause of this behavior.]</p>	
<p><b>Suicide attempts early in life are linked to lifelong health and economic struggles</b>, finds a study led by Duke University researchers. The study tracked more than 1,000 New Zealanders from birth to age 38 and found that those who attempted suicide before age 24 were twice as likely as their peers to develop metabolic syndrome in their 30s and had significantly higher levels of systemic inflammation. They were also three times more likely to have been hospitalized for a mental health problem, 2.5 times more likely to be convicted of a violent crime, consumed twice as much welfare support and were unemployed for twice as many months as the other study participants.</p>	