

PSY 111
BASIC PRINCIPLES IN PSYCHOLOGY
EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN PRACTICE ACTIVITY

Philip teaches first grade at Anderson Elementary School. He believes that educational television programs such as *Sesame Street* promote reading ability in young children. Twenty parents respond enthusiastically when he asks for volunteers to participate in a three-month experiment, allegedly designed to “examine children’s television watching preferences”. Ten children are randomly assigned to a group in which they are required to watch the one-hour *Sesame Street* program each day after school. The remaining ten children are required to watch a one-hour non-educational cartoon each day after school. After the three-month period, Philip administers a standardized reading test to the children in both groups.

1. What is Philip’s hypothesis?

A hypothesis is a testable prediction. Philip’s hypothesis is that children who watch Sesame Street will score higher on a test of reading ability than children who do not watch Sesame Street.

2. What is the independent variable?

The independent variable is the variable that is manipulated in an experiment. In this case, the independent variable is type of television program.

3. What is the dependent variable?

The dependent variable is the variable that is measured in an experiment. In this case, the dependent variable is reading ability as measured by a standardized reading test.

4. Which is the experimental condition?

*The experimental condition in an experiment is the condition in which the participants are exposed to the treatment (or variable) of interest. In this case, the experimental condition is the condition in which participants are randomly assigned to watch educational programming (that is, *Sesame Street*).*

5. Which is the control condition?

The control condition in an experiment is the condition that serves as a comparison to the experimental condition. In this case, the experimental condition is the condition in which participants are randomly assigned to watch a non-educational cartoon.

6. What findings would support Philip’s hypothesis?

Philip’s hypothesis would be supported if participants in the experimental condition score higher on the standardized reading test than participants in the control condition.