

## **Memo: Guidelines for doing write-ups**

John Alderete, Cogs 200, Simon Fraser University

### **Main issues/questions/problems:**

What is the paper about? What are the principal issues that are discussed, or the specific problem it is focused on? Try to answer these questions in a few lines, and make an effort to separate out, as much as possible, distinct issues and problems.

### **Main claims/conclusions:**

What are the main claims made in the piece? Don't repeat the whole argument, but what are the major conclusions reached? Give them in skeleton form, stating in your own words the 'take home messages'. Also, some of the papers present an overview of several papers, in which case try to summarize the principal claims of this body of work. Again, separate out distinct conclusions and claims.

### **Foundational concepts**

Define the important concepts you need to refer to in writing the following two sections. These may be foundational concepts introduced in a background lecture in the class, or new concepts not addressed yet. You may make use of definitions given in class or the readings in this section.

### **Methodologies**

On which methodologies are the arguments and conclusions based? Try to give some relevant details of the methods that were important to the argument. For example, if an experimental methodology is used, try to characterize the task involved and the specific variables used.

### **Summary of principal arguments**

Summarize the principal arguments made in the work in bullet point form. Each bullet is an important premise in the argument or the conclusion. If there is more than one argument, summarize all of them. However, if one or more arguments are similar in nature, i.e., they have the same structure and related conclusion, just note that your summary includes all of these related arguments.

### **Discussion**

This section is your chance to be creative and synthesize the material from the readings. It should be at least a page long, single space. How does the reading relate to the larger issues discussed in the class, or the issues discussed in other readings? Try to establish parallels between similar approaches to different cog sci problems, and also point out differences. Also, try to be clear about the implications of the assumptions presented in the reading for other things not talked about, like for example, in another cognitive capacity. In general, what can be done with the ideas and conclusions discussed in the paper that hasn't already been done? A note on format: if you discuss distinct points, separate them with distinct sections and give each section a good section header.