

Psych Labs: Reaction Time Experiment — Data Sheet

Name of Student Participant _____

Section _____

Instructions: When you reach the Your Results page near the end of the experiment session, copy your own results into the data table. When the pooled results are available, copy those results into the next row.

	Condition Order	RT S-L	RT S-R	RT C-S	RT C-D	NC S-L	NC S-R	NC C-S	NC C-D
Sample Results	S-R, C-S, C-D, S-L	225.1	258.8	308.2	342.6	10	10	8	7
Your Results									
Pooled Results	-----								

Brief Background for this Experiment

Reaction time (RT) is a measure of how quickly you can respond to a particular stimulus. Technically, RT is the elapsed time between the onset of some external event (such as a light or sound) and a behavioral response (such as pressing a button). Another term for RT is “response latency”. We can represent the sequential information flow on an RT task as

stimulus => sensory neuron => CNS => motor neuron => response

Many factors have been shown to affect reaction times, including age, gender, physical fitness, fatigue, distraction, alcohol, caffeine, and whether the stimulus is auditory or visual. The main factor studied in this experiment is the number of response options.

In a “simple reaction time” task (such as our two S conditions), there is only one response. As soon as the stimulus event occurs, you make the response. But in a “choice reaction time” task (such as our two C conditions), there are multiple responses, each tied to a particular stimulus.

A second factor we studied was stimulus-response compatibility—namely, whether the stimulus appeared on the same side of the body as the hand used to make the response.