**Inclusion criteria for meta-analysis:**

* The study investigated one of the following things:

1. The experimental effect of background noise, speech, or music on reading/ proofreading
2. The effect of chronic exposure to environmental noise on reading/ proofreading

* Only studies investigating the immediate effect of background sounds on reading/ proofreading were included. Experiments that studied the effect of long-term exposure of music as an intervention for reading were excluded.
* The study contained a condition of reading in silence. This served as the baseline to which background sound manipulations were compared. Studies without a silence baseline were excluded.
* Participants were native speakers of the language in which they were reading.
* The study was done with normally-developing participants.
* External environment and additional manipulations should not introduce confounds