**Inclusion criteria for meta-analysis:**

* The study investigated the effect of experimental exposure to background noise, speech, or music in a reading/ proofreading task.
* Only studies investigating the immediate effect of background sounds on reading/ proofreading were included. Experiments that studied the effect of long-term exposure to music as an intervention for reading were excluded. Studies that investigated the effects of chronic exposure to traffic noise were also 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.
* The study had appropriate randomization and counter-balancing of the sound conditions.
* Participants were native speakers of the language in which they were reading.
* The study was done with healthy, typically-developing participants (either children or adults).
* The external environment or any additional manipulations did not introduce confounds.
* Participants were not tested on the contents of the sound that they were listening to (e.g. speech).
* The assessment task emphasized comprehension of the text rather than reproducing the text from memory as accurately as possible.
* The comprehension assessment did not occur too long after the reading phase (usually within 10-15 minutes).
* The comprehension assessment was not done under conditions of noise, speech, or music.