**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. Studies that were interventions for removing the effects of chronic exposure to 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.
* Participants were native speakers of the language in which they were reading.
* The study was done with typically-developing participants.
* External environment and additional manipulations should not introduce confounds
* Subjects were not tested on the contents of the sound they were listening to (e.g. speech).
* Assessment task emphasized comprehension of the text rather than reproducing the details of the text as closely as possible. Also, it didn’t occur too long after the reading phase (usually within 10-15 minutes).
* The comprehension assessment was not done in noise/speech/music