

Writing An Introduction

OUTLINE AND EXPLANATION

Introductions should provide a review of previous literature, definitions and introductions of relevant terminology and processes, and underscore the knowledge gap that your paper will address.

1. Provide a hook that will engage the reader. Why is your paper important? What knowledge gap will it fill? An example would be citing a statistic about the prevalence of a disease your paper is about, and how deeply it affects patients.
2. Introduce the topic. Define any terms and explain any processes, no matter how intuitive they may seem to you. Remember, you are an expert in this topic—your reader is likely not.
3. What has previous literature already revealed? Does previous lit reinforce your hypothesis, or contradict it? Is there a general consensus in previous lit, or are the results inconsistent? In this section, explain in detail specific studies that have already been conducted and what they found.
4. What is your research question? How does it address the knowledge gap? Do you have a hypothesis, and what is it? What led you to form your hypothesis (previous lit, etc)? Give a very brief (one to two sentences) overview of your research paradigm. For example, “To solve this knowledge gap, a cross-sectional longitudinal study was conducted of adults with major depressive disorder.” You don’t need to go into detail, because you will do that in the Methods section.