



Introduction

In addition to a title page and an abstract, the text of your paper should be broken into sections. For these sections, following sections should begin on the same page where the previous one left off, and not necessarily on a new page.

General guidelines

In this section, you are essentially providing background information on the topic. You should explain why the topic is important and give the reader an idea of where you are going in your paper (i.e., what aspects of the topic you will be focusing on). Then review the relevant literature. Please see the section on using sources in your paper for information on how to cite your sources and how to use quotations in your paper.

The introduction should be clearly organized and flow nicely. One way to do this is to use headings. Headings help the reader understand the paper's organization and they show what topics are of equal importance. Look at the sample experimental report for an example of how headings can be used in the introduction. Headings can also be used in other sections of the paper.

Note: the introduction section should not be labeled "Introduction"; just use the title of your paper.

You should always assume that your reader is not an expert on the topic; however, you can assume that your reader has some basic knowledge of the topic. You should explain your ideas thoroughly and clearly. Avoid the use of jargon wherever possible.

Writing an introduction for a literature review

For the literature review, the "introduction" is the entire text of your paper. You should explain why the topic is important and give the reader an idea of where you are going in your paper (i.e., what aspects of the topic you will be focusing on). Then review the relevant literature, organizing it in a clear and easy to follow manner. For example, you could organize the review chronologically, in order of importance, or as it relates to different perspectives on an issue or to sides of a controversial problem.

You do not need to mention every study conducted on the topic; only the ones that are most important to what you want to say. You also do not need to provide a lot of detail about the procedures used in other studies. Most literature reviews only describe the main findings, relevant methodological issues, and/or major conclusions of other research.

After you have introduced your topic, reviewed the literature, and written a conclusion, you then need to include a reference list at the end of your paper, and you're finished with your literature review!

Writing an introduction for an experimental report

In the introduction to an experimental report, you do not need to mention every study conducted on the topic, only the ones that are most important to what you want to say. You also do not need to provide a lot of detail about the procedures used in other studies. Most introductions only describe the main findings, relevant methodological issues, and/or major conclusions of other research. Methodology is usually only described if you want to say that it is flawed or an inappropriate way to measure the phenomenon, or if you are using their methodology.

You should explain why the current information out there is not sufficient to explain the phenomenon and how you addressed the problem. State what your hypotheses were and what previous findings these hypotheses are based on, leading up to why the method you used is the best way to test these hypotheses. You should conclude this section by describing the goals of the study and a brief idea of the methods used. This allows your paper to flow nicely into the method section.

Continue on to the next part of the workshop to learn more about the next part of an experimental report.

The following information must remain intact on every handout printed for distribution.

This page is located at

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/workshops/hypertext/APA/print/parts/intro.html>

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