

Guide To Writing A Research Paper in Psychology

I. Introduction

A. General Purpose

- tell why did the study, tell what the research question is, why its important, how its unique/fits in with previous research
- Theoretically this section could be complete with only 4 paragraphs. They would include: the general introduction, the literature review, the connection of the present study to the literature and the explicit statement of purpose. However, expanding on each of these will make virtually every introduction much longer.

B. Lead in of the topic

- broadly introduce topic so that it appeals to a wide range of readers ATTENTION GRABBER!!!! (specifically those that may not study exactly what your paper is on); engaging/urging the reader to want to continue *Some good techniques include: quotes, statistics, anecdotes, general statements*
- give some justification of why people should care (why its important)
- give some insight to what you are trying to accomplish
- defining relevant concepts is a good idea
- don't need to go into an exhaustive historical review

C. Organize the Literature/Writing an Outline

- set your articles up in a coherent manner that will "tell a story" and set up your study
- your intro should logically flow from one topical area to another; it should seem as though a majority of previous literature naturally points to your study/topic as the next logical step
- 1) Why Make an Outline?
 - helps to get you started without actually writing; avoids writer block
 - organizes ideas helping you to plan out the paper
 - points out the parts of the paper that are done or that need more work/literature searching
 - SAVES TIME → minimizes the need to write several drafts

D. Writing the Introduction/Filling in the Outline

- The literature review of relevant work emphasizes pertinent findings or theories that contributed to your interest in the problem
- from the abstracts and your outline you should already know in what order you will talk about your articles
- the results (what did they find) and how they relate to your own topic are the most important parts of the article
- 1) For Each Article:
 - What did they study?
 - How did they study it?
 - Who were the subjects?
 - Did they use any special methods?
 - What did they find?
 - How is this important to your general topic? or How did this lead to your hypotheses?

E. Give Your Hypotheses

- Make sure you have stated your hypothesis in a clear and specific manner. This is typically right at the tail end of the introduction section.
- Be certain that the hypotheses make clear predictions about how you think the independent and dependent variables will be related to each other
- You can use something like "The present study was designed to..." or "The purpose of this study was to..."