

## What is it?

The introduction is the place to factually recount what it is you will be discussing in the thesis. You use it to introduce the research, discuss the contribution, talk about how the thesis is structured, and outline the core arguments and findings.

## What should you avoid?

- Ease into the detail gently. Don't launch straight from your opening paragraphs into huge amounts of detail
- Don't use lots of poorly defined technical language
- Unless you are explicitly avoiding a literature review chapter, don't extensively review the literature in your introduction

## What should it include?

A typical PhD thesis introduction has the following structure:

1. Introduction to the introduction: a short version (of only a few paragraphs) of the thesis' aims, research questions, contribution, objectives and findings
2. State the overarching topic and aims of the thesis in more detail
3. Provide a brief review of the literature related to the topic (this will be very brief if you have a separate literature review chapter)
4. Define the terms and scope of the topic
5. Critically evaluate the current state of the literature on that topic and identify your gap
6. Outline why the research is important and the contribution that it makes
7. Outline your epistemological and ontological position
8. Clearly outline the research questions and problem(s) you seek to address
9. State the hypotheses (if you are using any)
10. Detail the most important concepts and variables
11. Briefly describe your methodology
12. Discuss the main findings
13. Discuss the layout of the thesis

## How can you make it great?

- Make sure you provide enough detail so that the person reading it can understand what your thesis is about just from reading the introduction
- Make sure you follow a coherent structure
- Make sure the first paragraphs of the introduction discuss the problem that your thesis is addressing and the contribution that it is making
- Ask yourself whether you have summarised the research and discussed how the thesis is structured
- Make sure you have clearly outlined your contribution
- Make sure you have clearly articulated your research questions and any hypotheses

## How does it relate to other chapters?

- It summarises the thesis as a whole in more detail than the abstract
- It sets up the research by introducing the topic, providing relevant context and setting the scene for the literature review
- It is mirrored by the conclusion. In the introduction you outline what you are going to do, whereas in the conclusion you say what you have done. They need to align.

## Notes:

