[**http://macromomblog.com/2019/09/29/we-need-to-talk-more/**](http://macromomblog.com/2019/09/29/we-need-to-talk-more/)

**Structure of Introduction (in order):**

**THIS IS A VERY IMPORTANT PART OF YOUR PAPER**

1) Motivation (1 paragraph)

* Must be about the economics.
* NEVER start with literature or new technique (unless econometrics).
* Be specific and motivate YOUR research question.

2) Research question (1 paragraph)

* Lead with YOUR question.
* THEN set YOUR question within *most* relevant literature.
* My favorite is an actual question: “My paper answers the question …”
* Popular and acceptable: “My paper [studies/quantifies/evaluates/etc] …”

3) Main contribution (2-3 paragraphs, one for each contribution)

* YOUR main contribution:
  + MUST be about new economic knowledge.
  + Lead with YOUR work,*then* how it extends the literature.
* New model, new data, new method, etc.:
  + Can be second or third contribution.
  + Tools are important, not *most* important.
* Each paragraph begins with a sentence stating one of YOUR contributions.
* THEN follow with three or four sentences setting YOUR contribution in literature.
* Most important should be first (preferred) or last (sometimes most logical).
* YOUR contributions are very important. Make them clear, compelling, and correct.

4) Method (1-2 paragraphs, one for each method)

* Each paragraph begins with a sentence or two summarizing one of YOUR methods.
* Lead with YOUR most important model, identification, or empirical method.
* THEN follow with a few sentences that sets YOUR method in literature.
* Save technical points, model assumptions for the model section.

5) Findings (2 to 3 paragraphs, one for each main finding)

* Each paragraph begins with a sentence or two summarizing one of YOUR findings.
* Most important should be first (preferred) or last (sometimes most logical).
* THEN follow with three or four sentences setting YOUR finding in literature.
* YOUR findings are very important. Make them clear, compelling, and correct.

5) Robustness Check  (optional 1 paragraph)

* Choose robustness check that best supports YOUR most important finding.

6) Roadmap of paper (1 paragraph)

* One sentence for each section of YOUR paper.
* Be specific to YOUR paper, if possible.

PS My structure is NOT only structure that works well. Your chair may disagree. LISTEN to people who decide on your PhD. Look at best papers in general-interest journals from best researchers in your field. Innovate on economics, not on structure of YOUR paper.

PPS set YOUR research in context of prior research. We stand on the shoulders of giants. Even so, do NOT bury YOUR contribution after two sentences (or two paragraphs, yikes!) on others’ contribution. Do not share YOUR research in the order you did it.

**Structure of Abstract (in order):**

**ALSO VERY IMPORTANT PART OF YOUR PAPER**

* Write AFTER you are happy with YOUR introduction.
* Same structure as introduction, but sentences not paragraphs.
* Use main points from YOUR introduction. Focus on YOUR work

*Did YOU see a pattern? Yes, YOUR job market paper is about YOU!*

**Tables and Charts**

* Font size must not cause eye strain.
* ABSOLUTELY NO acronyms ANYWHERE in tables and charts.
* ABSOLUTELY NO equation symbols or variables names without WORDS too.
* Must convey takeaway within 10 seconds, without main text.
* Try to make charts for YOUR main findings. Here are [examples](https://www.federalreserve.gov/econres/feds/files/2019057pap.pdf).
* Label EVERY axis. Label EVERY column header.
* Use as few decimal places as possible.
* Must be clear what line goes with what label, including when print black and white.

**Other Random Economist Tips (not in any order):**

* Your paper is ALWAYS about YOUR work. Lead with YOU and then others.
* Get feedback on YOUR abstract and introduction:
  + Ask classmate (different field)
  + Professor (in addition to chair)
  + Follow-up nicely until they do.
* Let READER decide what is “important,” “obvious,” “surprising,” etc.
* Do NOT annoy reader by being grandiose. NO bait and switch.
* NO causal words for NON-causal estimates.
* NO shame in non-causal results. We can’t run experiments (thank goodness) for many questions in economics. Solid empirical work MATTERS.
* Do NOT trash prior research or call out its limitations or mistakes.
* Do NOT have stand-alone literature review section (unless adviser demands).
  + Integrate literature throughout your paper to set YOUR work in context.
  + Describe YOUR contributions, methods, and results *before* related literature.
* NO acronyms.
  + MPC is widely known in economics. I still use “spending propensity” or “spent $0.X0 out of every additional dollar within two weeks of receipt.”
* ABSOLUTELY NO acronyms for terms:
  + YOU create. (Avoid creating new terms.)
  + Terms created in last 25 years.
* NO economic jargon in introduction and abstract until explain in people words.
  + Know people words for economic jargon that YOU use.
  + MUST explain what is source of  “endogenous,” or “endogeneity”.
* Use jargon (and use it correctly) in the body of the paper.
  + Show that YOU know YOUR technical stuff.
  + Still useful to explain most important point in generalist economist words.
  + Macro folks be careful here, we are less beloved.
* Latex folks: Do NOT embed hyperlinks to your references.
  + Many read from PDF. Annoying to accidentally click and land far away.
  + Do NOT annoy reader and do NOT waste their time.
* Cite papers*most* related to YOUR paper. YOU are not writing a survey.
  + Use standard citations in text: (Author-Name, Paper-Year).
  + Cite most recent version of papers.
  + Check results YOU cite remain in their latest version.
* Make sure YOUR tone is NEUTRAL and stick to the facts.
* Use “my paper” not “this paper.” After citing others, “this” is ambiguous.
* Save policy implications for conclusion.

**Other Random Anyone Tips:**

* Say what YOU need to say and no more. Delete extra sentences.
* Keep sentences short. Make one point.
* Break long sentences or ones with more than one point in multiple sentences.
* Avoid “There are/is.” Re-write and shorten sentence. For example, change “There are problems.” to “Problems exist.”
* Be sparing with adverbs and adjectives.
* Avoid clauses at beginning of sentence. Start “my paper” “I model” “I find.”
* NO acronyms. Acronyms exclude new people.
* Read first sentence of every paragraph. Together they should tell YOUR paper.