**Tips for Writing the Introduction**

From our project guidelines:

1. **Introduction** A few paragraphs that contain background information, motivation for your research, and a statement of your research goals. Be sure to incorporate your supporting references into the text. The purpose of the background is to place your work in the greater context of the literature in the area you are investigating. Then you should explicitly identify the research question that you will investigate with your analysis.

Rubric:

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Introduction and motivation for the project** |  |  |
| Is the overarching question motivating the analysis clearly stated and explained? |  |  |
| Are specific questions this analysis will address clearly stated and explained? |  |  |
| Is relevant literature described and properly cited? Is the connection between the literature and this work made clear? |  |  |

From the Purdue Online Writing Lab:

In the introduction, you should provide a theoretical and empirical background for your research. You should explain important terminology and clearly state your research questions as well as what you expect to find (if applicable). Even if your readers are likely familiar with the terminology, it is helpful to at least briefly define the major concepts. Examples can make complex ideas clearer.

This is the section where you discuss previous research. When directly quoting *or* paraphrasing other researchers, cite the work properly (according to whatever style you have chosen). (If using a source that was cited in another source, name the original source first, then add “as cited in” followed by the original source. List only the secondary source in your References.)

After reviewing previous research, introduce your study and briefly explain its focus. End the introduction with a brief overview of your study, including your research goals.

From Explorable.com:

In the introduction, you are attempting to inform the reader about the rationale behind the work, justifying why your work is an essential component of research in the field. The introduction does not have a strict word limit but it should be as concise as possible. It can be a tricky part of the paper to write, so many scientists and researchers prefer to write it last, ensuring that they miss no major points.

The introduction gives an overall [review](https://explorable.com/what-is-a-literature-review) of the paper. It works upon the principle of introducing the topic of the paper and setting it into a broad context, gradually narrowing down to a [research problem](https://explorable.com/defining-a-research-problem), thesis and [hypothesis](https://explorable.com/how-to-write-a-hypothesis). A good introduction explains how you mean to solve the [research problem](https://explorable.com/research-paper-question), and creates ‘leads’ to make the reader want to delve further into your work.

You should assume that your paper is aimed at someone with a good working knowledge of your particular field, but who does not know anything about your particular topic/data.

**Background**

Like in any good Hollywood movie, the first task of the introduction is to set the scene, giving your paper a context and seeing how it fits in with previous research in the field. Whilst not the only way, this section, comprising the first paragraphs of your introduction, can be based around a historical narrative, from the very first research in the field to the current day. In many fields, this could make up an entire essay in itself, so you have to stick to relevant information.

**Importance**

This leads into the rationale behind the research, revealing whether it is building upon previous research, looking at something that everybody else has overlooked, or improving upon a previous research project that delivered unclear results. This section can then flow into how you are going to fill the gap, laying out your objectives and [methodology](https://explorable.com/writing-methodology). You are trying to predict what impact your research will have.

**Tips**

There are a few tips that can help you write a strong introduction, arousing interest and encouraging the reader to read the rest of your work.

* Keep it Short -- A long and rambling introduction will soon put people off and lose you marks. Stick closely to your [outline for the paper](https://explorable.com/research-paper-outline), and structure your introduction in a similar way.
* Define the Problem -- The entire introduction should logically end at the research question and thesis statement or hypothesis. The reader, by the end of the introduction, should know exactly what you are trying to achieve with the paper. In addition, your [conclusion](https://explorable.com/writing-a-conclusion) and [discussion](https://explorable.com/writing-a-discussion-section) will refer back to the introduction, and this is easier if you have a clearly defined problem.
* Organization -- As you write the paper, you may find that it goes in a slightly different direction than planned. In this case, go with the flow, but make sure that you adjust the introduction accordingly. Some people work entirely from an outline and then write the introduction as the last part of the process. This is fine if it works for you.