The purpose of the introduction is to prepare the reader for the rest of the paper without dwelling on extraneous background (or talking too deeply about the outcome of the study)

* + Put the study into context (why is it significant?)
  + Provide information relevant to understanding the underlying logic for the study (why are you doing it?)

If writing a paper, an editor will look here for more about the knowledge gap (and your approach to filling it). Make sure that you:

* + identify the question being addressed (is what you answer in the discussion posed as a question here?)
  + make it clear why this information is worth having (provide background relevant to question)
  + stay focused on what is relevant (delete anything that is not)
  + briefly describe and justify the experimental approach
  + state the answer to the major question you have identified (you have learned something)

Think of each paragraph as a unit of its own that contributes to the major message of the larger section. Within paragraphs, make sure to:

* + introduce the topic of that paragraph
  + close with a conclusion on that topic

***Moves in research paper introductions, according to Swales and Feak:***

Move 1 Establish a research territory:

1. by showing that the research area in general is important, central, interesting, problematic or relevant in some way (optional)
2. by introducing and reviewing items of previous research in the area (obligatory)

Move 2 Establish a niche:

1. by indicating a gap in the previous research, or extending previous knowledge in some way (obligatory)

Move 3 Occupy the niche:

1. by outlining purpose or stating the nature of the present research (obligatory)
2. by listing research questions or hypotheses (field dependent)
3. by announcing principal findings (field dependent)
4. by stating the value of the present research (field dependent)
5. by indicating the structure of the research paper (field dependent)

Complete an introduction by:

1. listing the research questions or hypotheses
2. announcing principle findings
3. stating the value of the present research
4. indicating the structure of the article (uncommon in primary research articles, can be used in theses/dissertations)

Reproduced from Table 26, Swales & Feak, 2004, *Academic Writing for Graduate Students: Essential Tasks and Skills* (second edition).

University of Michigan Press.