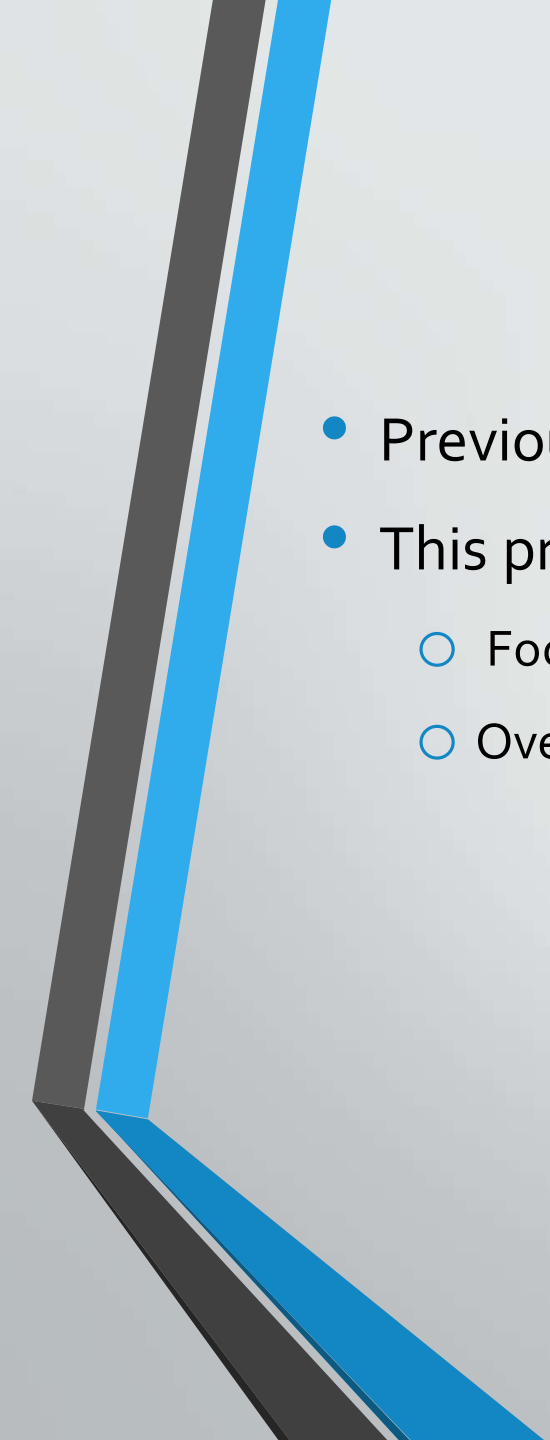




# ACADEMIC WRITING - DISSERTATION

- 
- Previous presentation – types of academic writing and their features
  - This presentation
    - Focus on dissertation
    - Overview of the different components of a dissertation

# WHAT IS A DISSERTATION?

- Long piece of academic writing based on original research
- Usually compulsory as part of a degree program and carries a heavy weight in terms of credit – so it's important to plan it well
- It has a well defined structure with minor variations – consult university guidelines on how yours should be presented

# WHAT IS A DISSERTATION?

- These are usually the main parts of a dissertation:
  - ❖ Preliminary pages
  - ❖ Introduction
  - ❖ Literature review
  - ❖ Methodology
  - ❖ Results
  - ❖ Discussion
  - ❖ Conclusion
  - ❖ List of references
  - ❖ Appendix

# PRELIMINARY PAGES

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  - ❖ Title page - dissertation title, your name, department, institution, degree program and submission date. Sometimes it also includes your student number, your supervisor's name and the university's logo

# PRELIMINARY PAGES

MIDLANDS STATE UNIVERSITY



FACULTY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Surveying and Geomatics Department

\*\*\*\*\*RESEARCH TITLE\*\*\*\*\*

CONCEPTUALISING USE OF VGI IN OPTIMISING COMMUNITY PLANNING OF  
FLOOD EVACUATION CENTRES IN ZIMBABWE: A CASE STUDY OF CITY OF GWERU

SUBMITTED BY: TAFADZWA CHIPUKA

STUDENT REGISTRATION NUMBER: R167468P

OCTOBER 2021

SUPERVISOR: MR P MUCHECHETERE

This dissertation was submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the Bachelor of  
Science Honours Degree in Surveying and Geomatics at the Midlands State University

DISCLAIMER

- ❖ Example of a title page
- ❖ Exact formatting may vary – check university guidelines



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# PRELIMINARY PAGES

## Example of an acknowledgement

*I would like to thank the following people for helping with this research project:  
Representatives from Historic England, Historic Scotland, the Society for the Protection of Scottish Buildings and the Sustainable Buildings Alliance for their willingness to impart their knowledge.  
All the conservation officers and heritage team members who took the time to complete my questionnaire and who contributed so thoroughly through their further comments and emails. I would particularly like to thank those conservation officers who agreed to be interviewed. Brenda P., my tutor, who guided me so positively and who always made me feel confident in my abilities after coming off the phone to her.  
Jan W. for his help with statistics. My husband and children for their patience and encouragement.*

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  - ❖ Table of contents – a list of all of your chapters, along with corresponding subheadings and page numbers. This gives your reader an overview of your structure and helps them easily navigate your document.

# PRELIMINARY PAGES

Example of a table of content

<b>Table of Contents</b>	
	Page
List of Tables .....	vi
List of Figures .....	vii
List of Plates .....	viii
<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	1-2
<b>CHAPTER 1: REVIEW OF LITERATURE</b> .....	3-12
1.1 Introduction.....	3
1.2 Chick management .....	4
1.2.1 Quality of chick .....	5
1.3 Feed and water supply .....	6-9
1.3.1 .....	6
1.3.2 .....	6
1.3.3 .....	7
1.3.4 .....	7
1.3.5 .....	8-9
1.4 Housing and environmental control.....	10-12
1.4.1 .....	10
1.4.2 .....	11-12
<b>CHAPTER 2: MATERIALS AND METHODS</b> .....	13-20
<b>CHAPTER 3:</b> .....	21-...

# PRELIMINARY PAGES

- ❖ List of figures and tables – a list of all tables and figures that have been used throughout the dissertation, along with their page numbers

# PRELIMINARY PAGES

Separate lists for figures and tables

List of Tables		Page
Table 1.1	Growing importance of chicken meat in Mauritius .....	3
Table 1.2	Composition of different types of meat.....	5
Table 1.3	Types of litter used.....	8
Table 1.4	Assessment of distribution of feeders .....	10
Table 2.1	.....	
Table 2.2	.....	
Table 2.3	.....	
Table 2.4	.....	

List of Figures		Page
Figure 1.1	Location plan of the Northern Plains Irrigation Project .....	18
Figure 1.2	Monthly means for rainfall, evaporation and potential evapotranspiration at Pamplémousses .....	25
Figure 1.3	.....	
Figure 1.4	.....	
Figure 1.5	.....	
Figure 2.1	.....	
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# PRELIMINARY PAGES

Example of a list of abbreviations

List of Abbreviations	
Atmosphere	atm
Centimetre	cm
Degree celsius	°C
and others	<i>et al.</i>
Gramme	g
Gross National Product	GNP
Joule	J
Kilogram	kg
Litres	L
Tonnes	T
Molar	M
Personal Communications	pers. comm.
Weight by volume	w/v

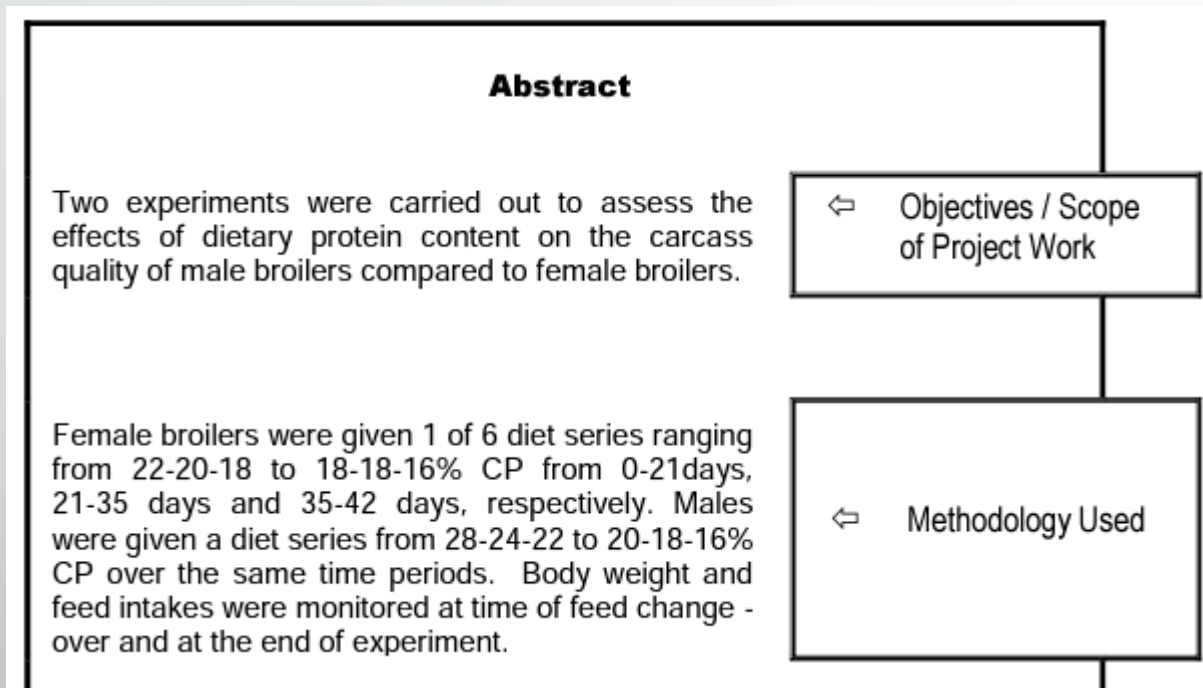


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- ❖ Abstract
  - ❖ A short summary of your dissertation, usually about 150 to 300 words long
  - ❖ One of the most important parts of the dissertation where you introduce your study by summarising your whole work in a concise manner

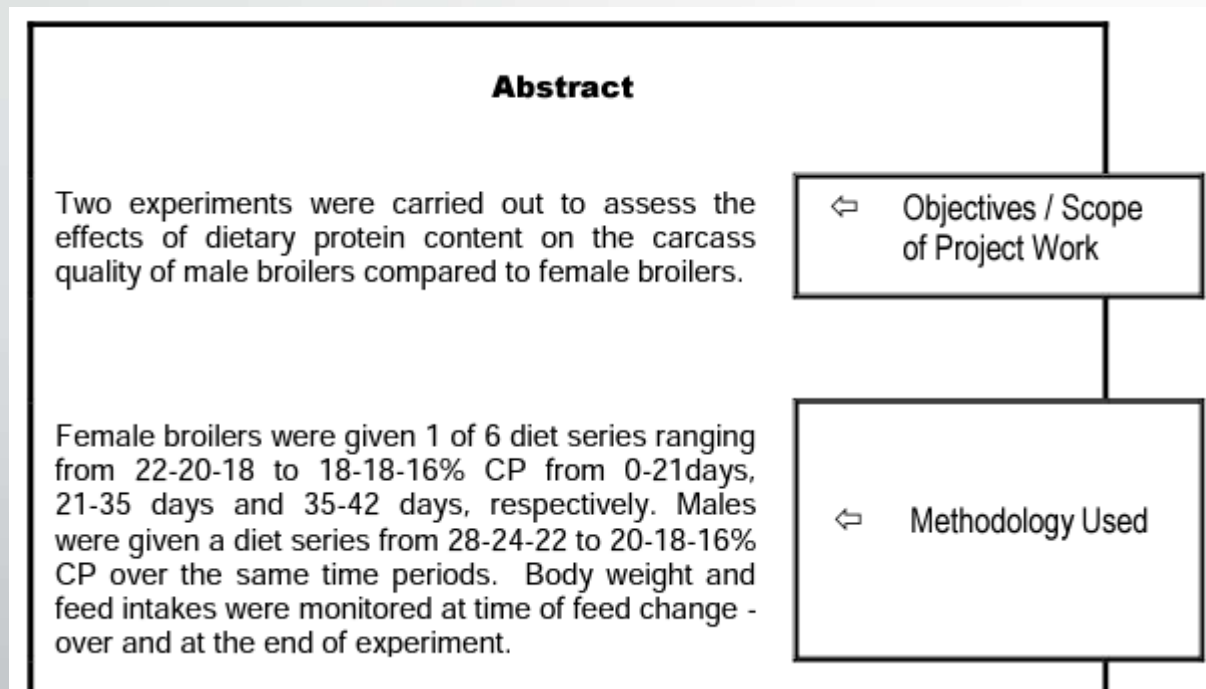
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Example of an abstract showing key features



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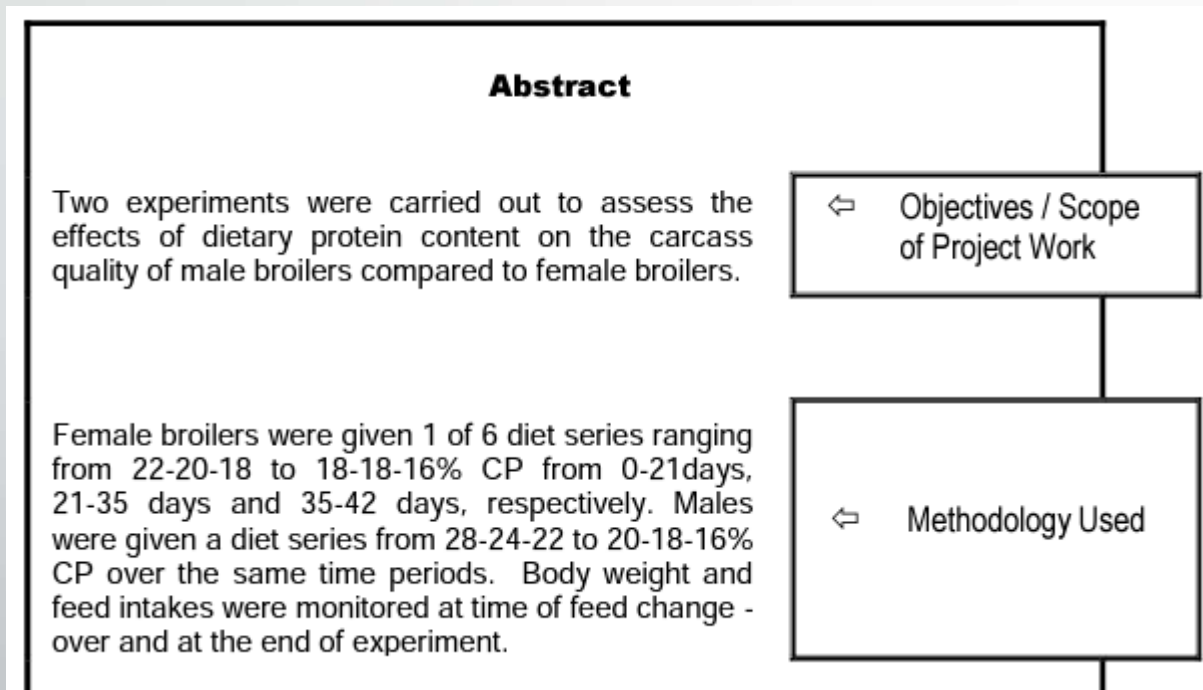


Feature 1:

Brief description of the purpose of the work

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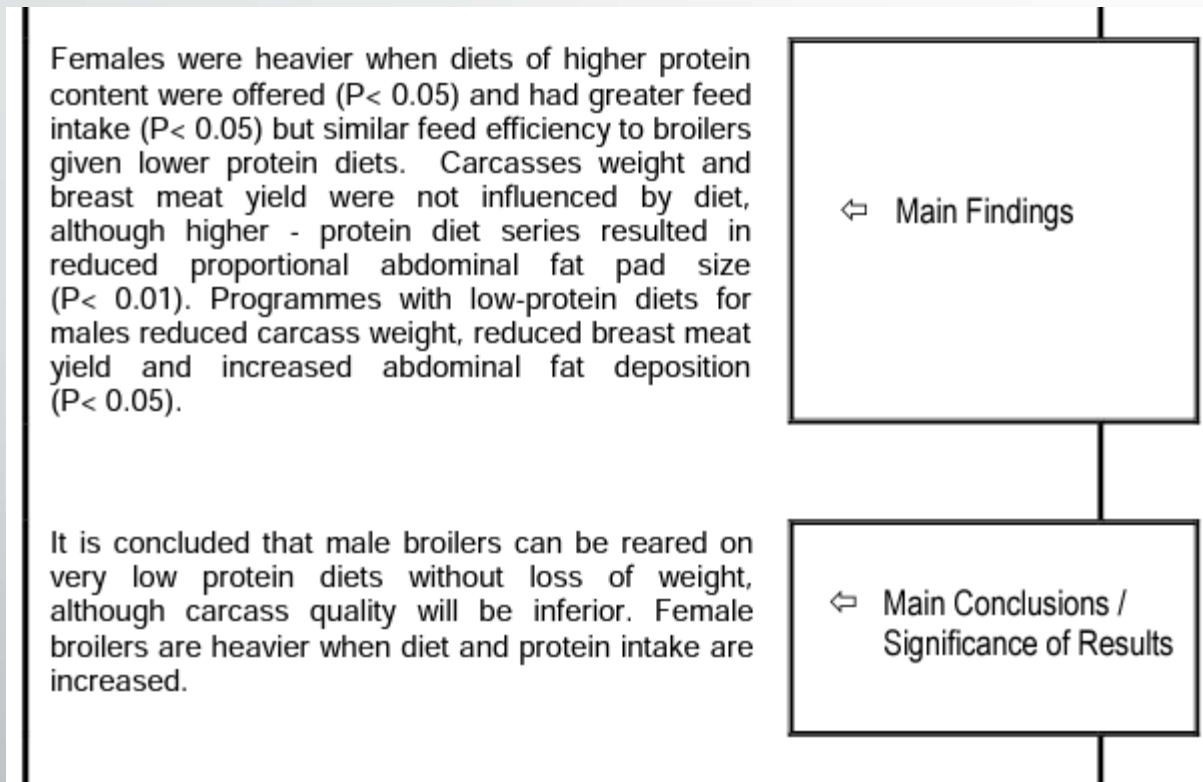
Brief description of the purpose of the work

Feature 2:

Summary of the methodology without going into significant details

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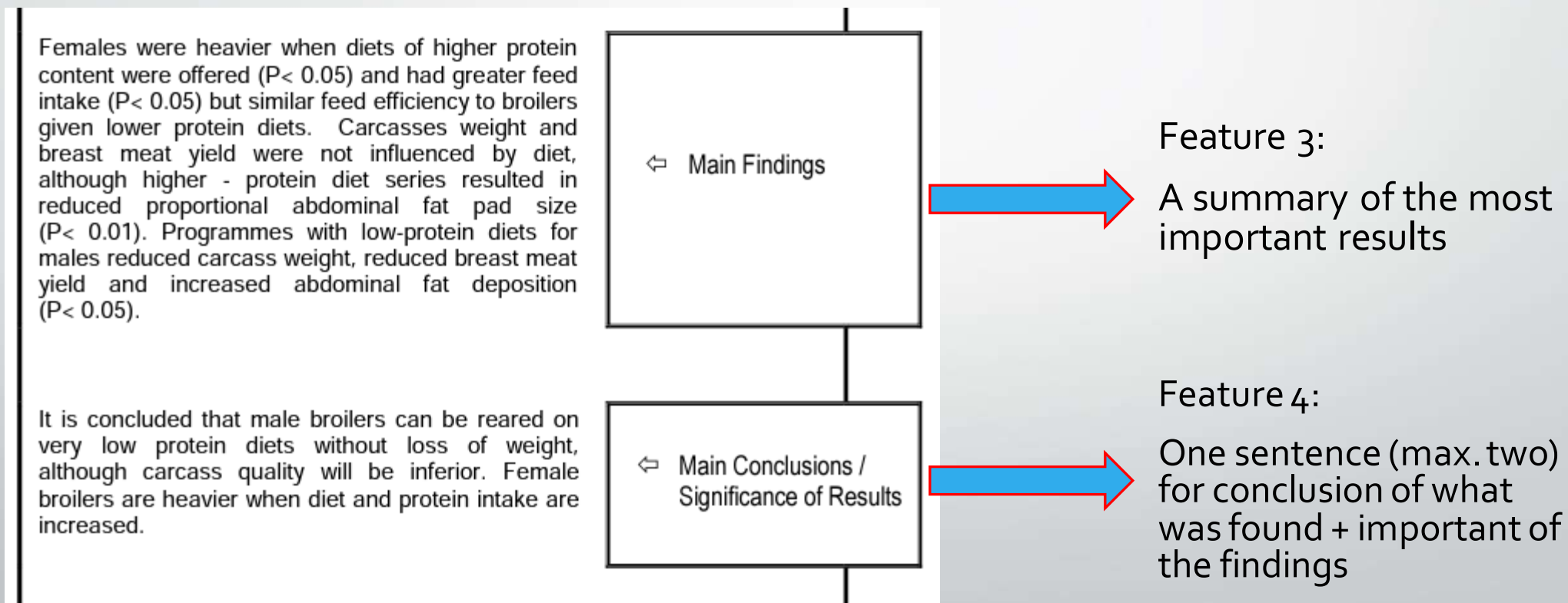


Feature 3:

A summary of the most important results

# PRELIMINARY PAGES

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- The introduction establishes your research topic, giving the background information needed to understand the purpose of your work

# INTRODUCTION

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  - ❖ Start with a short background explaining what your research will focus on

# INTRODUCTION

Consider this paragraph which is part of a short introduction:

“Young people will determine the future of climate policy, so it is essential to gain an in-depth understanding of their engagement with this issue. While there has been research on youth attitudes toward climate change in general (Corner et al., 2015; Holmberg & Alvinus, 2019; Lee et al., 2020), little has focused specifically on how teenagers understand and respond to current climate policy.”

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The highlighted part explains the purpose of the study

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- This highlighted part gives examples of previous research
- It also points out the gaps in the research which have been done so far

# INTRODUCTION

The same can be said for this paragraph:

“The increasing prominence of youth climate activism suggests that teenagers are highly aware of the issues at stake. However, it is unclear to what extent they directly engage with government policy in this area. To fully understand the current state of climate politics, it is important to gain a more complete picture of young people’s knowledge and perceptions of domestic climate policy.”

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- Blue: What needs to be done to fill this gap
  - ❖ This is where you mention how your study will be useful

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# INTRODUCTION

- Example of aim vs. objective

Aim: To investigate the relationship between physical activity and mental health.

Objectives:

- To review the existing literature on the relationship between physical activity and mental health.
- To collect data on the physical activity levels and mental health of a sample population.
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- In this example, the aim is to investigate the relationship between physical activity and mental health. The objectives break down the aim into specific tasks, such as reviewing the literature, collecting data, analyzing the data and drawing conclusions

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  - ❖ Conclude the introduction with a statement on how you expect your work to be useful

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  - ❖ So, start early (can be started even before you begin actual experiments)



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  - ❖ It reflects your ability to understand what has already been done on the topic, the strengths and weaknesses of existing studies and, most importantly, the ability to show how your work/project will fit in

# METHODOLOGY



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- Sometimes referred to as the “Materials and Methods” section – exact naming should be based on university guidelines



# FEATURES OF THE METHODOLOGY: ORGANISATION



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1. Divide into sections instead of continuous text

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### 2.1. Plant Material and Extract Preparation

Aerial parts of the native plant *F. oolepis* S. F. Blake were collected from the hills of Córdoba Province, Argentina, in December 2005. A voucher specimen was deposited in the “Marcelino Sayago” Herbarium of the School of Agricultural Science, Catholic University of Córdoba (UCCOR 23). The authorization for the use of the plant is available from the authors. Crushed air-dried material (200 g) was extracted by 48 h maceration with 700 mL of ethanol, and the yield of the extract, obtained after solvent removal and expressed as percentage weight of air-dried crushed plant material, was 23 g%.

### 2.2. Chemicals, Equipment, and Reagents

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  - ❖ E.g., sample collection, experiment 1 with the sample, experiment 2 with the sample, analysis of the results, etc.

# FEATURES OF THE METHODOLOGY: ORGANISATION

## 2. Methodology

### 2.1. Plant collection and storage

### 2.2. Extraction

### 2.3. Screening of phyto-constituents

### 2.4. Quantitative phytochemical analysis

#### 2.4.1. Total phenolic content

#### 2.4.2. Total tannin content

#### 2.4.3. Total flavonoid content

### 2.5. Quantitative antioxidant assay

#### 2.5.1. Quantitative DPPH free radical scaven...

#### 2.5.2. Ferric reducing power assay

### 2.6. Antibacterial activity assay

#### 2.6.1. Microorganisms used in this study

#### 2.6.2. Quantitative antibacterial activity by ...

#### 2.6.3. Antibacterial interaction activity

### 2.7. Cytotoxicity assay

### 2.8. Statistical analysis

- Note the different sections
- In practice, it is possible that section 2.4 was done before 2.3 or that 2.4.1 was done alongside 2.5.1, but each is organised separately for a logical flow

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  - ❖ In the case of surveys, how and why specific questions were selected, questionnaire design, selection of sample size, etc.

# FEATURES OF THE METHODOLOGY: ORGANISATION

## 2 Methods

2.1. Study population

2.2. Data collection

2.3. Status of adherence to lifestyle suggestions

2.4. Assessment of lipid measurements

2.5. Assessment of ASCVD risk and CVD mortality

2.6. Statistical analysis

} Again the methods are provided as different sections organised in a logical flow



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  - ❖ BUT be concise – not too vague and not go into too many minor details
  - ❖ Reproducibility reflects the quality of your work!!!

# FEATURES OF THE METHODOLOGY: REPRODUCIBILITY

## Example: Reproducible research

For your final research paper, you have interviewed consumers about their perceptions of food waste at the household level.

To make your research reproducible, you describe step by step how you collected and analysed your data. You also include all the raw data in the [appendix](#): a list of the interview questions, the interview transcripts, and the coding sheet you used to analyse your interviews.

In this way, your readers can follow your process, seeing how you arrived at your research findings.

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  - ❖ This experiment was performed as previously described by XXX et al. (reference year).
  - ❖ This style is more common in research papers - **NOT RECOMMENDED** for dissertations (but may be acceptable in some cases)



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- All results obtained during an experiment need to be analysed in order to understand what they mean
- Always include a “Data analysis” section in the methodology (very important)
  - ❖ Often an omitted section by students
- Clear and detailed description of what analyses were done