

Writing the Introduction, Abstract, and Conclusion (and Title) to a Research Paper

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- Should be prepared with 5 levels of discussion about research

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 - 20-minute conference presentation: summary of all parts of paper

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 - 5-minute proposal: research question, context, methods, result
 - 20-minute conference presentation: summary of all parts of paper
 - 1.0-1.5 hour presentation: in depth presentation of all parts of paper

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 - Work your way towards more detailed description
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Remember

You have to market and sell your value

Pools of papers

Papers

- *American Economic Review* current issue
- *Econometrica* current issue
- *Review of Economic Dynamics* current issue
- *Journal of Economic Dynamics and Control*
- *Computational Economics*
- Information Economics and Policy
- NBER, This Week's Working Papers

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- Conclusion, introduction, abstract should be last steps (in that order) of a paper

Sections of Computational Project

Sections of a paper

- 1 Abstract
- 2 Introduction
- 3 Theory/model
- 4 Data
- 5 Estimation strategy/results
- 6 Experiments/interpretation
- 7 Conclusion

Order of completing sections

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Order of completing sections

- 1 Theory/model and data
- 2 Estimation strategy/results
- 3 Experiments/interpretation
- 4 Conclusion
- 5 Introduction
- 6 Abstract

Steps to research paper

1 Hone research question

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- Can make title at this point
 - Title should not be cute (unless absolutely irresistible or unless senior researcher)
 - Title should not be too long
 - Title should refer to research question, tell what paper is about
 - Title might even be research question (with question mark)

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2 Then work on body of paper

3 Lastly, write:

- Conclusion
- Introduction
- Abstract

Conclusion

- Conclusion is the first thing you should write after finishing the body of the paper.
- Should be fairly short (3-to-8 paragraphs)
- Briefly summarize key results and takeaways
- Reiterate limitations of results or analyses (where bodies are buried)
- Can talk a little bit about extensions and future work
- Most readers don't make it to the conclusion

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Key point

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- Faculty find difficult to delegate this section to student coauthors
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- Think of introduction as executive summary
 - Introduction is the most read section of the paper

Intro is marketing center of paper

- What is research question?
- Why is it important? Why should anyone care?
- How do you answer the question? Data, theory, methods, experiments
- Summarize results
- Literature: What do you add to what has already been done? Put paper in context, **NOT MORE**
- Optional: paragraph describing the structure (outline) of the paper

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Where should research question appear?

State the research question prominently and clearly somewhere in the first two paragraphs

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- Build a network

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- Should be between 5 and 10 sentences

What is in a good title?

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 - “Killer Acquisitions”, “Mind the Gap”
 - This is a little risky. Are you a star?
- Some are essentially an abstract (too descriptive)
- Title should reference your research question

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NBER Working Paper titles

How many titles actually end with a question mark? ([link](#))