

Writing an Introduction

BUS 230: Business Research and Communication

Goals and Learning Objectives

- Goal: Learn tips to write an effective introduction to a research paper.
- Learning objective: LO4: Develop the ability to effectively communicate research results both written and orally.

Purpose of the Introduction

1. Bring the audience from their world to where they need to be.
 - Give them background information to understand the topic you will be addressing.
 - Give them background to understand why this topic is important or interesting.
2. State your research question / the purpose of your paper.
3. Motivate the paper
 - Provide a rationale for conducting this research project.
 - Convince the reader that the answer your research question this is something important to know.
 - Motivate your work with a review of other research.
4. Review relevant literature that puts your research question into context with previous research.
5. Briefly outline what will be done in the paper.

Good Background Information

Write only information your reader needs!

- If it is something that is common knowledge, **then they don't need it.**
- If it is background information you don't need to *understand the research question, motivate your work or understand remaining parts of the paper*, **then they don't need it!**
- Don't just add filler!! This is worse than writing nothing.

Literature Review

- Dual purpose:
 1. Put your research into context with existing research. What is already known about this topic, versus what is your contribution?
 2. Motivate your work.
- Do not just list paper after paper in paragraph form. Think about the purpose of each paragraph you write.
- Your literature review should be telling a story about what is known and not known in this field, citing other research papers provides examples for the story.
- Cite in paper using Lastname (YEAR):
 - Murray (2010) finds that living on campus caused students to perform better in school.
 - Herro and Murray (2010) find that uncertainty about monetary policy reduces economic stability.

When to Write your Introduction

- Write your introduction last!
 - The introduction needs to set up the whole paper, talk about what is to come, even share the results.
 - The best way to do this is when you already know the what is in the rest of the paper.
- Write your introduction first!
 - This helps you figure out for yourself what you want your paper to accomplish.
 - This helps you figure out why you want to conduct your research.
 - Why might guide how you conduct your research / what methodology you use.
- Harry Shaw once said, “There is no such thing as good writing. There is only good rewriting.”
- Roscoe Born once said, “What you have written is only preparation for what you are going to write.”

Other Tips

- Pay special attention to the first sentence
 - But not right away, just get started then re-work this later.
 - Make it something useful!
- Don't make opening too broad.
 - Example, "Our financial system is large and complex..." is too broad an opening for a topic of college students and credit card debt.
- *Judge every sentence!*
 - Go sentence by sentence and ask, does this need to be here?
 - Would the paper be just as good without it?

In-class Exercise

- Find my article on living on campus and academic performance.
- *Estimating the effects of dormitory living on student performance*
<http://www.accessecon.com/Pubs/EB/2010/Volume30/EB-10-V30-I1-P81.pdf>
- Find the section, "Related Literature"
- There are six paragraphs, each with a point. For each paragraph, summarize the point in a single sentence.
- For each paragraph, what pieces of evidence are used for each point. State the citation and what the paper found.