

PSY 209 Winter 2012
Introduction Draft Assignment: Due Friday 2/10
Worth 15 Points

To avoid the stress of writing of your entire APA paper at once, you will be working on drafts of its individual components throughout the quarter. This will keep you on track, provide you with feedback and editing skills, and keep your work-load manageable at the end of the quarter.

The goal of the introduction is to introduce the topic of your research, provide background information including past research on the topic, and explain the purpose of your study. With the introduction, you will introduce your research question, summarize and cite past relevant research, and identify your hypothesis/prediction. For additional help, look at readings #11 and 16 in your reader. **Note: This is an individual assignment and should not be written as a group.**

QUESTIONS TO GUIDE YOUR WRITING:

What is your study specifically looking at?

- In a few sentences, state your research question, so that your reader understands what you are about to talk about. Although what you're studying is very specific, the first few sentences of your introduction should present a "10,000 foot view" of your research idea, to bring the reader in to what they're going to read about. Think about other research you've read: Middlemist, Matter and Knowles (1976) start out with defining the idea of personal space. Takarangi and Strange (2010) started their report with a question: "Does time heal all wounds?" (p. 354). If your study is a close replication of another study, you might start your introduction with describing that research right away. There isn't a right or wrong here, and you can use some poetic license to draw the reader's interest.

What is known about the variables in your study, based on the previous research?

- In 3-5 paragraphs, describe what is known about the issue in question and each variable of your hypothesis, as it relates to your hypothesis.
- Identify key research done in the area so far. You must cite at least 3 studies which you have read that connect in some way to your research. Make sure to provide enough information about each study so that a reader understands the relevance of the research to your question. You may use the citations you provided in your research proposal, and/or you may find new ones. The studies should be relevant to your study and help justify your interests, predictions, or methods.
- Cite past relevant research and not just the studies whose results you agree with. You might find studies that support contradictory findings, and suggest what might underlie the differences (look especially at the discussion sections of the articles you are comparing). If you have found conflicting research, start with one study's findings, then discuss if there are any conflicting results or arguments that have emerged. Try to explain the source of the disagreement (e.g. different populations, different methods, not a sensitive enough scale).

*Some material in this handout adapted by permission from the UW Psychology Writing Center.

What question/hypothesis is your group investigating in this study? What do you predict?

- This is the last paragraph of your introduction.
- State your hypotheses in clear, simple terms.
- Explain how you derived these hypotheses, referring back to the previous literature.
- Tell the reader why your study is relevant – how will it examine the issue in a new way? What will your findings contribute to the body of knowledge on this topic?
- Include, separately, or with your hypothesis, your predictions for your study.
- If you wish, you may list your hypotheses if you have more than one (“This study will test the following hypotheses: (1), (2), (3).....”).

HELPFUL HINTS:

- Make an outline that shows the progression of research that has led to your hypothesis and use this to guide the flow of your introduction.
- Use specific language and support your arguments with concrete examples. Subjective phrases like “I feel” or “We think” often signal unsupported statements that need to be explained. Try to keep your introduction in the third person as much as you can, although limited use of the first person is allowed (look to other research studies you’ve read for a sense of this).

ASSIGNMENT REQUIREMENTS:

- Paper should be typed (12 pt Times font and double spaced with 1” margins on all sides).
- Introduction should be **about** 3-5 pages. (This is not a firm requirement; it is a guideline for what normally constitutes sufficient information without excessive verbiage.)
- Avoid plagiarism by giving credit where credit is due. Whenever you discuss someone else’s ideas, cite the name of the author and the year of publication (see reader #1 and #7).
- Paraphrase an author’s ideas rather than using exact quotes whenever you can. (Paraphrasing demonstrates that you understand what you are talking about and guarantees that you are using the previous research correctly in your paper. Excessive quoting is frowned upon in APA style.) If you have to use direct quotes, cite authors, year, and page number.
- For more APA guidelines, see section 2.05 (p. 27) and figure 2.1 (p. 42) of the APA Publication manual (available in the NSCC library if you do not have it).