

Contents and Format of APA Papers

Who is your audience?

- Your audience is a group of colleagues.
- Write your paper so that it could be understood by students in a research methods class at another university.
- They will not have the exact background information that you do.
- But, with sufficient explanation, they should be able to understand what you did and why.

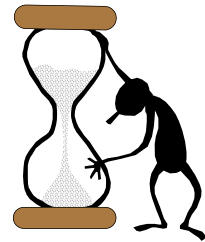
“Content” sections

- Abstract
- Introduction
- Methods
- Results
- Discussion

The Body of the Paper

...can be described as an hourglass

- Broad general statements
- Progressively narrows to specifics of study
- Broadens out to general considerations



Today's Topic: The Introduction

- What is the purpose of the study?
- What is already known about this topic?
- What are the theoretical implications of the study, and how does the study relate to previous work in the area?
- How do the hypothesis and the experimental design relate to the problem?

Getting Started: Grab the reader's attention (Kendall, Silk, & Chu, 2000)

- Ask a rhetorical question-
 - *Why do past traumas continue to haunt us?*
- Note an everyday experience-
 - *A friend shares a sad story, our first reaction is "That's awful!" But might this response alter our friend's memory for that event?*
- Give an analogy-
 - *Psychologist William James believed that human consciousness flowed like a river, continuous and changing, yet ever the same.*

Getting Started: Grab the reader's attention (Kendall, Silk, & Chu, 2000)

- Note the lack of research on the topic
 - *Consciousness is an integral part of everything we do, yet we understand so little about its nature.*
- Give a striking statistic/fact
 - *Although student retention efforts have increased, the dropout rate in the state of Washington has doubled in the last ten years.*
- Give a history lesson
 - *Aristotle postulated that we are born a tabula rasa- a blank tablet on which all of our experiences are etched.*

The Bulk: Literature Review

- Examines past research concerned/related to your research question.
- Only describe main findings, conclusions, relevant methods, measures used
- Focus on the research, not the researchers
- Organize the research thematically rather than chronologically if possible
- Raise questions, comment on shortcomings, highlight inconsistencies of previous research if relevant to your question

The End: Your study

- The implications of your study: How does it contribute to existing research?
- The nature of your study: What is your plan for studying this topic (a concise summary)?
 - Includes the IV, DV and how they were operationalized
- The hypothesis: “It was hypothesized that...”, “We expected...”, “We predicted...”

Formatting

- 12 pt Times Roman
- Double-space everything
- 1” margins on all sides
- Do not justify lines
- Use past tense when talking about past research or your hypothesis, present tense when discussing current theories