

The Introduction Section



The Basics

- “This is why I am doing what I am doing”
- Theoretical background
- Literature review
- Builds up to your hypotheses



Start _____

- “Top of the hourglass”
- Snag the reader
- Talk about “people in general” as they relate to your topic
- Present prevalence or frequency information if it’s a problem
- Purpose of study (not hypo) at the end of the first paragraph
- Section should get steadily more specific and end with your hypothesis





_____ is Key

- There should be no question as to why you are conducting this research
- Illustrate with real world examples



Be Consistent and

- Your literature review must be relevant to your hypothesis
- If there are conflicting results in the literature, focus on one side and only present the counterargument briefly

Literature Reviews



The Basics

- Theoretical background from broad to specific
- Cites previous research for evidence
- Critically evaluates what is missing from past research
- Builds up to hypothesis

Back It Up!

- All claims must be backed up with _____
- “Studies show”, “Past research has found” MUST be accompanied with a citation
- Focus on what others FOUND, not on their method (unless you are pointing out a flaw)
- Anecdotal evidence ≠ empirical evidence
- Integrate common findings in one sentence

Same finding across articles?

- Gore & Lillie (2006)
 - Found that criminal behavior is negatively associated with GPA
- Gore & Terzino (2003)
 - Found that criminal behavior is negatively associated with GPA
- Smith & Gore (2002)
 - Found that criminal behavior is negatively associated with GPA
- Past research has found that criminal behavior is negatively associated with GPA (Gore & Lillie, 2006; Gore & Terzino, 2003; Smith & Gore, 2002).



Don't Have Any Evidence?

- Write "(REFS)" at the end of the sentence so I know you are looking
- Go back to PsychINFO, find an article that backs up the claim and cite it for the final paper



Can't Find Any Evidence?

- Discard the claim
- Turn it into a testable hypothesis



The Hypothesis Subsection



No _____

- No part of your hypothesis should come out of the blue
 - Set-up each piece for what you predict
- Literature review should set-up what we already know about these variables
- Provide an explanation of “what’s missing” in the literature



Make It Easy for the _____

- Create a separate subsection labeled “Hypothesis” or “Hypotheses”
- Have a statement that highlights your prediction:
 - “The current research tests the hypothesis that...”



No Additional Explanation

- Hypothesis is the “_____”
 - A good joke doesn’t require anything further than the _____
- Literature review should have done all of the work for setting this up
- No need to say “I predict this because...”



Phrasing It

- Make sure it is a clear prediction of what you expect will happen
- What kind of comparison are you making?
 - Correlational? Specify direction of association (positive or negative)
 - Experimental? State which groups you are comparing and who will be higher on the DV



Writing Issues



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- Avoid first-person pronouns
 - Try not to use “I”, “we”, “our”
 - Refer to “the current study” rather than “I”
 - Avoid colloquial phrasing
 - E.g., “...goes hand in hand with...”
 - Avoid cryptic language
 - No jargon, say what you mean in English



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- Synthesizing information
 - Esp. literature review
 - Logical argument
 - Consistency in argument
 - No contradictions
 - Each paragraph follows from previous one
 - Introductory statement
 - Information to support that statement (citing specifics)
 - Conclusive statement that leads into next paragraph



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- Avoid awkward and run-on sentences
 - Read your paper out loud
 - Say what you mean in English
 - Passes the “Mom Test”
 - Especially important in Results section



Features

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- Spelling
 - Errors noted as “sp”
 - Vocabulary
 - Errors noted as “w.c.” for word choice
 - Grammar
 - Errors noted as “gramm”
 - Punctuation
 - Errors noted as “punc”
 - Capitalization
 - Errors noted as “caps”
