

Introduction

The introduction is meant to introduce your reader to both your experiment and the background information surrounding the topic of your research. This means it defines the subject of your entire report. Introductions focus on three general ideas: 1) the central question or hypothesis of the research, 2) background information on the topic being studied, and 3) the rationale, or the reason why this is an important topic to research. Think of this section as the foundation for your entire paper.

Content

Use the following information to help guide your writing of the introduction:

- Clearly identify the subject of the study. Using the same keywords as the title of the paper is often helpful.
- **Background and Context**
 - Summarize what is known on the topic already.
 - Explain the basic scientific principles.
 - Give a general overview. Save in-depth analysis for the Discussion section.
 - Cite all sources!
- Describe the **Central Question** of the study and state the purpose of the experiment.
- State your **Rationale** for this experiment. How did you approach the problem? Why did you choose this experimental design?

Guiding Questions

- What was studied? Why is it important?
- What knowledge on this topic already exists?
- How will this study advance our knowledge?
- Why was the study performed? What is its specific purpose?

Style

- Past or present tense. Just be consistent! Many people prefer present tense here because it's similar to an English paper.
- Avoid first person if possible.
- Cite any sources. You must use sources for any background information. In text citations should be given according to MLA or ACS guidelines.
- This is an *introduction*, so introduce the topic appropriately. Be sure to provide background and context, but do not try to cover all of the information available on a given topic.

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