

Area of Study 3: Research Investigation – Writing the Introduction

Your introduction is like an essay in itself. It is not a 100-word paragraph, as in an English essay. It should contain several paragraphs, including the following:

1. Introduce the topic.
 - What does your research question actually mean? Why is it important, significant or worthy of being investigated?
2. Define any key terms that a non-psychologist would need to know to understand your research clearly.
3. Provide an overview of the topic by referring to the studies you have read. We have asked you to refer to three studies in your introduction. One of these is to be your featured study, which is to be explored later in more depth.
 - When mentioning studies they must be referenced:
e.g. A study conducted by Smithers (2013) investigated / explored / considered the question of...
A recent study has supported the idea that..... (Smithers, 2013)
 - If there are more authors:
Smithers, Smith & Smythson (2014) - for 3 authors or fewer
Smithers, et al., year - for more than 3 authors

Once you have referred to an author like this, you must also include the title of the study and its original source in your References section. So don't lose these details.

4. Introduce your focus study:
 - **Who** completed the study? - reference the study as above
 - **What** was the focus of the research?
 - **Why** was the study done? What were the researchers trying to find out? Did the study fill a gap in existing research? Did it replicate earlier research or explore new possibilities?
 - **What hypothesis** was formulated in the original study?

✳ Remember to use the helpful language tips from the “Tips, Hints and Layout” handout:

- ...may influence...
- ...can have a detrimental effect on...
- ...may play a role in...
- ... _____ is a risk factor in the development of...
- ... this study suggests that...
- ... this study provides evidence that...
- ... there appears to be a positive association between...
- ... the findings indicate that...
- ... the results cast some doubt upon the view that...
- ... the presence of this factor/these factors increases the probability that...
- ... this may impair the capacity to...
- ... this factor/these factors may be linked with the development of...
- ... these findings support / mirror the results of the study by...
- ... it must be emphasised that...
- ... the findings underscore the need for...
- ... the study did not establish whether...
- ... these behavioural responses have been linked with...
- ... this raises concerns for...
- ... this may lead to...

