

## **Framing Your Research in an Introduction**

How you frame your research in the introduction section of a manuscript can fundamentally impact the focus, scope, and aims of your writing. A well-crafted introduction can help your reader understand how you are positioning your research amid on-going conversations and, furthermore, what you are accomplishing by undertaking specific critical examinations. Conversely, a poorly-written introduction can make it difficult to identify your central argument or specific intervention within a given discipline. Hence, the introduction of an article, essay, or book chapter is one of the most important parts of any manuscript.

This worksheet will help you draft an introduction for a journal article, academic essay, or book chapter. To clarify, this worksheet is not an "instruction set" that will help you write a perfect introduction every time. Rather, the questions below are designed to foster a critical awareness of how you plan to contextualize the relevance and impact of your research. Being aware of the underlying rationale you are using to frame your research will make it easier to plan, draft, and revise an introduction. Lastly, please be as specific as possible when answering the following questions. The more specific you are, the easier it will be to write and revise.

The following questions are organized around three specific writing strategies that can be used to write an introduction. The first strategy is to frame your research as *building a bridge* between different fields-of-study or scholarly conversations. The second strategy is to frame your research as *addressing a problem*. The third strategy is to frame your research as *building upon an opportunity*. Please choose one of these strategies and answer the corresponding questions below.

### **Questions for Using the "Building a Bridge" Strategy**

If you want to frame your research as building a bridge between different academic debates, critical trends, or scholarly conversations, please answer the following questions:

**1. The "building a bridge" strategy requires you to identify at least two different trends or scholarly conversations in the hopes of connecting these trends/conversations in your own research. What is one trend/conversation that you plan to discuss in your research?**

When answering this question, you should cite and/or paraphrase specific research sources that are representative of the trend/conversation you want to engage with. Please summarize these sources (and the broader trend/conversation they represent) as if you are speaking to an audience with no background knowledge on this topic.

**2. What is the second scholarly trend or conversation that you plan to discuss in your research?**

As with your response to Question One above, you should cite and/or paraphrase specific research sources that are representative of the second trend/conversation you want to engage with.

**3. Why is there a "gap" between the trends or conversations you identified?**

For example, do these two different trends/conversations use different key term? Or, do they define the same key terms in different ways? Do these two different trends/conversations analyze the same object-of-examination using different methodologies? Furthermore, are these trends in direct conversation/debate with one another, or are do they exist parallel to one another?

**4. In what way does your own research build a bridge over the gap you identified in Question Three above?**

When answering this question, it would be useful to first address the "common ground" that exists between the two trends/conversations you identified. In other words, try to explain how these two trends/conversations share similar values, methods, or goals before explaining how your research resonates with this "common ground." Knowing the "common ground" that exists between two trends/conversations will make it easier to show how your own research can contribute to current scholarship.

**Questions for Using the "Addressing a Problem" Strategy**

If you want to frame your research as responding to a problem, please answer the following questions:

**1. What specific problem do you want to respond to?**

For example, are you responding to potential biases or limitations in previous research? Are you attempting to negotiate an obstacle that other researchers have been struggling with? Or, are you responding to an issue that emerges in real-world situations?

**2. What are the causes underlying this problem?**

If you are discussing biases or limitations in previous research, explain why these biases or limitations emerge (i.e., issues with research methodology, issues with available data, etc.). If you are addressing a real-world problem beyond the confines of a specific discipline, explain what variables contribute to this problem.

**3. What are the consequences of this problem?**

That is to say, why do we need to focus our attention on this problem right now? What are the risks of overlooking or not acknowledging this problem?

**4. How does your research respond to the causes underlying this problem or mitigate the consequences of this problem?**

If you are attempting to address biases/limitations in previous research, you need to explain how your own methodology accounts for these biases/limitations. If you are addressing a real-world problem, you need to explain how your own methodology resonates with the underlying causes of this problem or resolves the consequences stemming from this problem.

### **Questions for Using the "Building Upon an Opportunity" Strategy**

If you want to frame your research as responding to a problem, please answer the following questions:

#### **1. What specific opportunity to you want to build upon?**

For example, is there a new technological development in your field? Has an industry started to take advantage of new research? Are there new methods or theoretical frameworks that scholars are starting to apply to their research?

#### **2. What is novel about this opportunity?**

For example, if you are talking about a technological advancement, you would explain the unique features of this new technology and the new affordances created by its development or use.

#### **3. How have other scholars in your field discussed this new opportunity?**

You will need to locate and cite at least two resources to answer this question. Please be as specific as possible when discussing how others have discussed a new opportunity.

#### **4. Based on your response to Question Three above, what is unique about your own approach to this opportunity?**

In other words, how are you approaching this opportunity in ways that other scholars have not? How are you taking advantage of this opportunity in ways that have not been done yet?