

Section 2. Introduction as an IMRD component

Unit 1. Introduction:
Structural analysis

Hi, Welcome to our second section. Today we are here to talk about the structure of the first section in a research paper — introduction.

In this video, you will learn about basic components of this section and their functions.

Let's have a closer look at the parts of a sample Introduction section and analyze what the writer is doing in each sentence of the sample. Let's dissect the section. One way to figure out what the writer is doing in a sentence is to ask yourself these questions:

What is the tense of the main verb?

What is that tense normally used for?

Is it the same tense as in the previous sentence?

If not, why has the writer changed the tense?

What words has the writer chosen to use?

Now, read a sample Introduction section that you can see on your screen. The title of the paper is The synthesis of high-strength alloys from copper and zinc. Try to answer the questions mentioned. Continue watching to check yourself. So, are you ready to check?

In sentence 1 the writer emphasizes **the importance of this research topic**.

In the majority of research articles, the research field or topic is introduced in the first sentence. They might concentrate on how much research has been done in this field, how useful it can be, or just how significant it is. If you look at your target articles, you will probably find something that establishes the importance of the research in the first one or two sentences. Here, phrases like "...much study in recent years...plays a major role...are frequent."

In sentence 2 the writer gives the reader a **broad context**. Research articles usually begin with accepted or established facts. This ensures that the reader shares the same level of background information as the writer and is therefore ready to read the article. Grammatically, the established fact is expressed with the use of the Present Simple Tense, for example “are produced.”

In sentence 3 the writer expands **the background in more detail** using references to other studies to back up both the background information and the claim of significance.

Don't the research references mean that this is part of the literature review? No, they don't. **The brief literature review** that will follow later is typically found in the introduction of a research article and is more likely to discuss specific studies and their methodologies or findings.

Why does the author include references if they are merely for context?

For three reasons: first, plagiarism (not praising someone else's work) is unprofessional. Second, referencing **allows** readers **to find** and read the studies mentioned. The third reason is that the lack of references may indicate **a lack of familiarity** with the field of research.

In sentence 4 the writer describes **the general problem area or the current research focus** of the field.

Note that the authors have not yet described the specific issues addressed by this research paper. He/she will describe the current focus of the field, the issues that are of interest to many researchers in the field, and lead to the specific problems addressed in this article.

In sentence 5 the writer makes **transitions between general problem areas** and literature review. Usually, references to previous or current research are provided even in a sentence whose function is only to provide a transition.

In sentence 6 the writer provides **an overview of important research projects** in this area. The literature review can't be just given in any order. The references and studies should be arranged in an order to make it easier for the reader to process them in a logical way. **References can be arranged in three ways:**

- chronologically;
- around different approaches/theories/models;
- moving from general research in the field to more specific ones that are close to the writer's study.

In sentence 7 the writer **describes a gap** in the research. This is exactly where the writer introduces the purpose of the paper and the specific problem they deal with. And they do this by creating a research space: by describing a problem in the previous research or by indicating that there is a gap in the research. Such signalling words as *however* or *although* can normally signify this gap.

In sentence 8 the writer **describes the paper** itself.

In sentence 9 the writer gives **details about the methodology** reported in the paper.

In the next sentence the writer briefly **announces the findings**.

Here are the functions of our sample Introduction section from the ten sentences of our sample Introduction:

Sentence 1: the importance of this research topic

Sentence 2: a broad context

Sentence 3: background in more detail using references to other studies

Sentence 4: the general area of concern/the current area of research focus

Sentence 5: transitions between general problem areas and literature review

Sentence 6: an overview of important research projects in this area

Sentence 7: a gap in the Research

Sentence 8: description of the paper

Sentence 9: details about the methodology

Sentence 10: the findings.

To sum up, you have learnt the basic component of the first section of a research paper in IMRD format – Introduction and the functions of these components. You have learnt that this section establishes the importance of the field, refers to previous research, locates the gap and clarifies the problem to be dealt with. Finally, it gives an outline or a brief description of the paper. That's all for today. In our next video, we will talk about Grammatical features of the Introduction section.