General Structure of a Research Paper

***INTRODUCTION***
- Introduce Broad Topic
- Review the Literature
- Illustrate GAP in Literature
- Introduce Research to Fill GAP
- State the Hypothesis or Research Question

***METHODS***

***RESULTS***

***DISCUSSION***
- Summarize Results
- Explain/Interpret Results
- Connect back to the Literature
- Talk about Broad Impact
- Mention Limitations and Future Research

***REFERENCES***

**Introduction**: Begins with the topic and narrows down to the specific focus of the paper (i.e., the funnel structure)

Include only literature that is RELEVANT to your paper in terms of setting the reader’s expectation for your research question. (Include citations!)

Demonstrate the unique thing YOU are doing in your paper — has anyone ever looked at this before? Is this a different population, measure, method, etc.? Is this a replication of someone else’s work? Your intro should lead the reader think “yeah, this really DOES need to be studied!”

**Methods**: Include enough detail that someone could replicate your study.

**Results**: Include the facts and only the facts. No interpretations.

**Discussion**: Begins by restating the results (no statistics, just words). Then explain WHY you got the results you did — did they support your hypothesis? Why/Why not?

How do/don’t your results make sense in light of the published literature? Were your findings consistent/inconsistent with what is known in the field?

How do your findings potentially affect the larger field? Do they inform future practices? Do they illuminate a new problem or issue? What should future research do/investigate in light of your findings?

What were the limitations of your study? (No research is perfect!)

**References** You must include them. In APA style, they are on a separate page and listed alphabetically.