

Freshwater Ecology Lab Project
Fall 2018
30 points

Guidelines for the Introduction

- *Why should I read this paper?*
- *What did the author try to do in this study?*
- *Why would anyone want to do that?*

Answering these questions should be foremost in your mind when writing an introduction to a scientific paper. An effective introduction presents the rationale for a study. It should bring a reader up-to-date on the relevant background information and present a convincing case for why the study should be conducted. An introduction should excite the reader so that the reader has to keep reading to discover what happens. Although this background information comprises the majority of the text in an introduction, it is really just warming the reader up to the punch line: *the questions to be answered and the hypotheses to be tested*. The primary questions and hypotheses come at the end of the introduction in a focused paragraph or two. Many writers find it easier to write the background after they have written the questions and hypotheses.

Your job is to write an introduction for our project. You need to include a review of the pertinent literature (cite at least six papers that you deem relevant and include a literature cited section) as part of the background and rationale. It helps to start big in the opening paragraph and move to more specific points in subsequent paragraphs. I recommend that each paragraph (after the first one) builds a case for each of your specific objectives/hypotheses. You do NOT have to include all or any of the actual hypotheses you turned in for the hypothesis assignment (in other words you can change them at this point). The major questions asked or objectives to be tackled, as well as a few important hypotheses to be tested are required to be included in your introduction. As a reminder, you need at least one hypothesis focused on the comparison of the rates of decomposition of our cellulose strips between the stream channel and the tree-root depressions with respect to abiotic conditions and one hypothesis focused on how organisms will play a role in the differences in decomposition rates between the two habitats. There is no page requirement, but 2-3 pages are likely necessary to build your case. Do not be long-winded—including extra information just to show your brilliance results in readers reaching the opposite conclusion. Double space all typed text. The printed copy of your introduction is due **12 October 2018**.