

## **Title**

### **By: Author Name**

[Include the title of the paper and your name below. There is no need for a title page or abstract, but you can include one if you would like.]

[The entire paper should be in 12pt. standard font such as Calibri, double-spaced, with 1-inch margins.]

This paragraph is the Introduction paragraph. It should start on the line immediately following your title and name. The introduction is also known as the Statement of the Problem paragraph, meaning that it introduces the problem that you are focusing on in your research. The Introduction is important because it shows how you will be framing your entire paper. Start this paragraph by broadly introducing your general topic (Note: starting with “Domestic violence is a problem” is TOO broad) and then narrow down to the niche that your research will be focusing on. Use this paragraph to setup the context of your paper. Though short in length, this paragraph is tough to write because it needs to be tight and concise in content. Don’t waste space beating around the bush. Use every sentence to state something necessary to introduce your topic. End this paragraph with a statement about what your research is doing. For example: “This study will explore/examine/expose [your topic] using experiences/descriptions/accounts of [your sample].” Remember, this is qualitative research so you are NOT testing hypotheses.

[The Literature Review heading should start immediately following the Introduction. The heading should be bold font and centered.]

### **Literature Review**

The literature review presents the existing literature on your topic in a synthesized manner. This literature review will be more focused than others you’ve written because it focuses on the literature that specifically relates to your research topic. The literature should be

organized by themes, NOT by study, meaning do not use each paragraph to introduce and summarize individual studies. Rather, you will have paragraphs that present findings from several studies that relate to a given topic. This will be substantively easier to do if you have thorough notes (AKA your annotated bibliography) on the content of the articles you are using for your literature review by the time you start writing the literature review. Just as in the Introduction, you will start broad and narrow your focus throughout the literature review, ending with the specific focus of your research study. You will use subheadings to break the literature review into subtopics.

### **Subheading #1**

[The subheading left aligned, in bold font, with title case. This is a label, but your subheading will be the topic of this subsection.]

You will have a subheading wherever you switch to a different (narrower) topic in your literature review. You'll typically have 2-4 but will vary based on the organization and content of your paper. It is most helpful to start with an outline of the subheadings and fill in the literature summaries where they fit within those subheadings. Remember, the goal of the literature review is not to educate the reader on the entire topic but to present what research has been done already on your topic, to highlight the contributions and limitations of those studies, and to discuss why further research (AKA your study) is needed. Again, this needs to be organized by topic not by study. What is important to know about this topic before we get to the details of the research you did with your study?

### **Subheading #2**

Throughout the literature review, you need to be citing other studies. You need a minimum of 8 scholarly references, five of which need to be peer-reviewed journal articles. The

other 8 sources can be peer-reviewed journal articles but they need to be scholarly (e.g., dissertation, academic book, etc.). There should be an in-text citation for every piece of borrowed/paraphrased material, and each in-text citation should correspond to a line in the references list at the end of the paper. Anything that is not cited is plagiarized! You must have an APA citation for every piece of borrowed material, and all material should be in your own words. Do not include direct quotations. Even when content is paraphrased, there should still be a citation for every piece of information that has been researched.

Make sure to cite the ORIGINAL source. That means that if you are reading a book with content that has a citation at the end of the sentence, you need to find the content that is being cited (AKA the original source), read it yourself, and then cite that source. You would NOT cite the book you're reading because they did not create that information (their use of a citation shows that they are not responsible for that information).

The literature review in total should be about 4 pages. DO NOT spend all of your focus on writing the literature review. The LR is simply to give us an understanding of the topic, including what research we know and what research we need. The most important parts of your paper are to come, and that is where you should be focusing the most of your energy.

### **Subheading #3**

The literature review will be about 85-90% cited material. The purpose of the literature review is to educate the reader on the existing knowledge on the topic. To do so, you must present existing research and include a citation. The other purpose of the literature review is to explain what we already know on the topic and why your study is needed. To do this, you will need to point out gaps in our knowledge on this topic. For example, if you're writing about DV

perpetrated against Latina women, you could argue that your study is needed because most of the research to date focuses on white women. Another example, perhaps most of the research on your topic is quantitative, and your study will contribute qualitative knowledge on this topic. Use the 10-15% of the literature review material that is NOT from other sources to point out issues with studies, justify the need for your study, and interpret the studies you're reviewing. This can include YOUR interpretation of the importance of that study. Why do you think this is an important study? What contribution do you think this study makes? What do you think are the limitations of this study? What are they missing that your study can add? What additional research do we need?

Finally, the end of your LR will culminate in the presentation of your research questions AKA what questions your study is going to answer. In writing the LR, you're pointing out what research is needed and how your study is going to address that. So it's natural that your LR ends with the questions that your study is going to answer. You can simply give a 2-3 sentence summary of why your study is needed and what it will accomplish, and then list your research questions.

1. What is your first research question?
2. What is your second research question?
3. What is your third research question?

### **Method**

It is at this point that your paper begins to focus on the data you've collected. We're moving on from presenting the research we already have to discussing the research that you're doing with the data you've collected. In the last part of your LR, you discussed what your study

is going to contribute and what your research questions are. That's the perfect segway to pivot to your specific study, which starts with the Methods section.

The Methods section explains what you (the researcher) did to gather the data. This section is about  $\frac{3}{4}$  - 1 page. The Method section should have enough detail so readers know exactly what you did to gather and analyze your data. Theoretically, the Method should be detailed and thorough enough so other researchers could replicate your study from your Method write-up. This section should have no literature and no findings, rather only things you did in collection of data. The Methods section should address the who, where, when, how and what of your data collection, but DO NOT use the heuristic questions of "where" or "when", etc. For example, "The present study utilized observations conducted in an ethnographic field setting. The setting was...." Remember, do NOT include any confidential or identifiable information such as the clinic name or location. Rather, give the general type of setting and broad identification of the location. For example, the DASH clinic would be a "Domestic violence restraining order self-help clinic in Southern California." Then you would explain what the DASH clinic does and why people go there, as your reader may not be familiar with the clinic. The important thing is to not risk the possibility that any people can be identified.

Next, you would talk about who the focus of your observation was. Was it all litigants? Were your sample of a particular demographic group? Though numerical descriptions of the sample would typically be given, it is not necessary for this study. Instead, just give the number of participants you're focusing on (e.g., 5 Hispanic male litigants). The "when" would be your overall number of hours spent observing, and the time span you observed (e.g. three-month period). You just need to give a feel for how much observation is represented in the findings.

The “what” and “how” of the methods describe what you did in the research. You need to include your role in the research (i.e., a participant observer, as a volunteer helping litigants) so readers know how your presence could have possibly biased the data. You need to paint a picture of what you did with words, describing how you gathered your data. How did you take notes? How did you convert your jotted notes to data? You need to describe this process in detail. Importantly, identify what your key concepts (AKA variables) that you were observing (e.g., race/ethnicity, batterer tactics, barriers, motivations, aggression, etc. depending on your paper and what you have been able to DIRECTLY observe).

## **Results**

The results write-up is about what YOU found and what you found only. There is no literature cited in the findings. The literature provides some framing for how you present and explain your findings, but it is not brought in directly (i.e., the literature helps with the categories for the findings section). The Results write-up is NOT a case by case description, rather it is organized by conceptual observed categories. The first paragraph of your Results section should give an overview of what the paper looked at and list the themes you identified from your data. From there, you should organize your findings by theme headings and subtheme subheadings to help organize the presentation of the data. Write the Results in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person.

### **Theme #1**

**[Note the headings/spacing for the Themes and Patterns sections.]**

The heading should be a general conceptual category (e.g., aggression in children, intimidation). First, write a general description of what you see in the data connected to that

concept. For example, discuss and provide description of what aggression in children looked like, if that were your topic. This is a summary of what you observed in the data. From there, you branch into patterns that fall under your Theme #1. You'll typically have 2-3 patterns for each theme. You're required to have 2 patterns for each theme. In order to have a pattern, it needs to be something experienced by at least 2 participants. For example, a pattern to your topic of aggression in children would be physical aggression, and another verbal aggression.

**Pattern #1.** Subheadings should be used for patterns observed (e.g., gender for aggression). Each group gets a subheading and a general description of what the data looked like. Use excerpts from your data to evidence your descriptions. You will need to complete the analysis process before writing your results section. This display of our field observations is how qualitative data are reported. Remember, always use pseudonyms, not actual names.

The patterns sections of your results will be the sections where you include content from your field notes to evidence the theme and pattern. To do this, you will give examples of the patterns you observed using content from your field notes. For example, explain how the litigants experienced verbal abuse, if that is your pattern. You will include all litigants who experienced that pattern in this section – do not leave anyone out. This content should be broken up into paragraphs based on a clear organization of what the patterns looked like. For example, in having a pattern of verbal abuse, you would perhaps have a paragraph dedicated to litigant experiences of name calling and another dedicated to litigant experiences of threats. Organize by topic, not dedicating a paragraph to summarizing each litigant's story.

**Pattern #2.** Use concrete language in the Results. Meaning, use the words that the litigants used; Don't make inferences and apply terms. For example, don't describe the litigant

as having trauma unless he/she used explicitly said they were “traumatized”. One of the benefits of qualitative research is that it allows a sense of voice to groups of individuals who typically don’t have a voice in our society. Thus, we want to retain that by not applying terms and allowing the voice of the litigants to come through in the results write-up.

### **Discussion**

The discussion section is a summary of the key findings of your study, written in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person, and is about 4 pages. I know that you may be exhausted by the time you get to the discussion but don’t fall short – the discussion is one of the most important parts! Give a summary of the key findings, situated within the literature presented in the literature review section. Meaning, compare your findings with the literature discussed in the LR section. Do this on a theme-by-theme basis. What is consistent with the existing literature? What findings contradict the literature? Use the literature to interpret your findings. You need to fit the research you did back into the larger literature context. Don’t forget to re-cite the literature you’re comparing. It is also important to note if your findings *extend* the literature, meaning if you found something that is not in the literature yet. This would typically be something that is tied to present day events that would not be in scholarly sources yet, such as events tied to the current political administration or climate.

After you’ve summarized and interpreted your findings on a theme-by-theme basis, give directions for future research and implications for policy and/or practice specific to your findings. This is the point at which you answer the “so what?” of your research. Why is your research important? What do your findings contribute to research, policy, or practice? For every piece of research there should be suggestions for research, practice, or policy. However,

be sure that your suggestions are grounded in what you found in your study. This is also the place to bring up any remaining or raised questions that were unable to be answered with these data.

Your discussion should also include a discussion of the limitations of your study. The purpose of this is so 1) readers can appropriately interpret and use your results; 2) future researchers can build on your study and address your limitations in their study. In writing this section, consider: a) your sample; b) your methodology; c) the generalizability of your findings; d) the representation of various populations; e) your data analysis. In considering these things, what should your reader know? What can be done better?

Finally, end your paper with a short concluding paragraph.

### **References**

List your references here in APA format. There is a separate handout on how to cite references here and in text. Each reference should be formatted like this, with the left aligned first line and indented second lines, double spaced.

References listed in the references list should be in alphabetical order based on the first author's last name. However, different rules apply to the in-text citations. Be sure to use the handout as a guide!

You need a minimum of 8 scholarly references, five of which need to be peer-reviewed journal articles. This is MANDATORY and they must be cited correctly.

You may cite information from non-scholarly, but reputable sources (e.g., CDC, CNN, DOJ)

However, these will not count toward the required number of sources.

Also, the references list DOES NOT count toward your page minimum.