How to write an introduction to a research paper

Under normal circumstances, an introduction consists of two paragraphs. If the writer goes over two paragraphs, one needs to ask the question, “Why are more than two paragraphs necessary?”

Your paper must include the components addressed below and nothing else.

As illustrated in the example on the right, the first paragraph focuses on the problem statement or answers the question: “Why is the subject of this paper important?”

Notice that citations are used to support the position of the author.

In contrast to the past in which rehabilitation workers dealt predominantly with physical disabilities, the problem of alcoholism and its treatment are currently demanding more attention. Statistically, alcoholic clients are being referred for vocational rehabilitation services with greater frequency based on data provided by The Office of Human Development (Washington, D.C.). However, the successful closure rate for alcoholic clients is relatively low. This data does not necessarily indicate that the clientele were unassisted by the Rehabilitation Services Administration. There are many variables to consider, such as high unemployment rate. For example, in 1974, the unemployment rate was 9.9 percent. The following year it jumped to 13.9 percent (U.S. Bureau of Census). Other variables include inflation, changes in closure requirements, and the stigma of alcoholism. Tringo (1976) shows us that alcoholic clients are of the least preferred groups of the rehabilitation worker case load. This same stigma often inhibits employers from hiring alcoholic individuals.

Recent developments in the area of alcoholism research can provide insight into better vocational services for alcoholics. The literature (Armor et al. 1976; Goldfried, 1969; Marson, 1976, Mindlin, 1959) consistently confirms the validity of certain prognostic indicators. This paper will describe how rehabilitation workers can utilize knowledge of some of these variables for the best interest of their clients. Six related variables will be discussed: cerebral dysfunctions, the family of the alcoholic client, drugs, the environment, abstinence, and employment. Although drugs and abstinence are not key variables, they will be discussed within this paper because of abuses by some clients.

The second paragraph outlines what the author is going to do in the paper. For survey research, this would include the sampling strategy, the sample size and the general findings.