

# U is a beautiful shape for your journal article. version 2.0



## Introduction

**Goal:** Both generalists and technical readers know why they should care

- Describe the problem at hand in a way that readers understand its importance.
- Set up the contribution they can expect to learn about and why such contribution is needed.
- Foreshadow how you will make the contribution.
- Provide operational definitions.



## Literature Review

**Goal:** Technical readers know enough about the technical state-of-the-art you will employ in the Body or Discussion

- Situate your work in relation to the existing knowledge.
- Prepare readers to make sense of the research design and frameworks you present in the Body.
- Set up any theory, analytic concern, or prior result you refer to in the Discussion.



## Body

**Goal:** Readers should know all specifics and details about your research design and arguments

- Describe your methods, frameworks, theories, data, analysis, and findings.
- Produce the evidence for your claims; this is the guts of the paper.
- Focus on your intended contribution, and minimize detours to other “interesting” aspects of your data if they aren’t important to your contribution.



## Conclusion

**Goal:** Both generalists and technical readers know your advance and why it matters

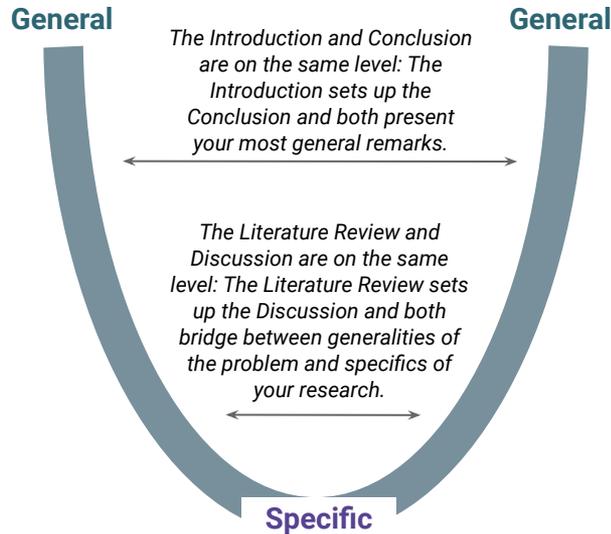
- Recalling the problem in the Introduction, explain:
  - How do your findings make a contribution, and what is the advance, in more general terms?
  - To whom does this matter and what can they do with it?
  - What is the new challenge now should future work build upon this work?



## Discussion

**Goal:** Technical readers understand the underlying meaning and implications of your research

- Recalling the technical context in the Literature Review, interpret your findings in the Body and explain:
  - What is new about your findings and what is different or supportive of prior work?
  - What is the strength, limitation, and/or weakness of your work?



# Tips for authors

## Build up your own U

- Know your intended journal and audience for publication before you start writing. Keep in mind what is valued for publishing in that journal (a good thing to ask colleagues/mentors about).
- Draft sections in an order that makes sense to you. You can start from methods or results.
- Think early about what the major contributions of this paper will be and focus on them.

## Tell a story

- Take the reader on a journey. Good papers tell a story. e.g., is there a tension your story resolves?
- Avoid repeating yourself throughout the paper. Early sections can foreshadow what comes next, but they should not fully disclose what later sections will add to the story.
- Provide guideposts that help readers follow the evolving story, keeping the current part in context.

## Take the perspective of your reader

- Choose your words to be clear and precise; communicate the exact meaning of your research.
- Use as little jargon as possible. Jargon can be exclusionary; it will limit your audience.
- Help the reader understand how you are using terms, concepts, variables, etc. – and also help them follow the connections you are making (e.g., from data to an interpretation)

## Learn more about scientific writing

- Journal Article Reporting Standards (JARS)
- American Psychological Association (APA) guidelines for:
  - qualitative research
  - quantitative research
  - mixed methods research articles