

Ph.D. Dissertation proposal Introduction structuring suggestions:

1. Try not to open with a definition kind of sentence: You want to establish that something is important. Say why it is important. Then you assert that despite its importance, it remains relatively unexamined. Then you put your thesis at the end of the first paragraph.
2. This section should be establishing the reasons why your thesis matters/is important
3. This section would address why the current research is limited—this is the paragraph in which you would prepare the ground for your study.
4. Here is where you establish what you do in your proposed study.
5. This section will explore how the analysis proceeds—various stages, etc.
6. This section will note the results
7. This final introductory paragraph will basically outline how the rest of the paper proceeds.

Sections 5 – 7 of the Introduction are easy to write. Avoid the temptation to skip sections 1 – 4 to get to section 5 as sections 1 – 4 establish the context of your study. At this point in your research process, the context may seem obvious to you but the significance of your research project is not necessarily self-evident to your intended audience.

Sections 1 – 4 will be the hardest part of your entire project with respect to the writing. Expect to rewrite those sections several times.

Follow the steps above. In most proposals, the first three pages should correspond roughly to sections 1-4 noted above; so it will probably take about 3 pages to do sections 1 – 4 correctly. Each numbered section is not necessarily a single paragraph—it may take a couple of paragraphs to accomplish the intended function of each section number.