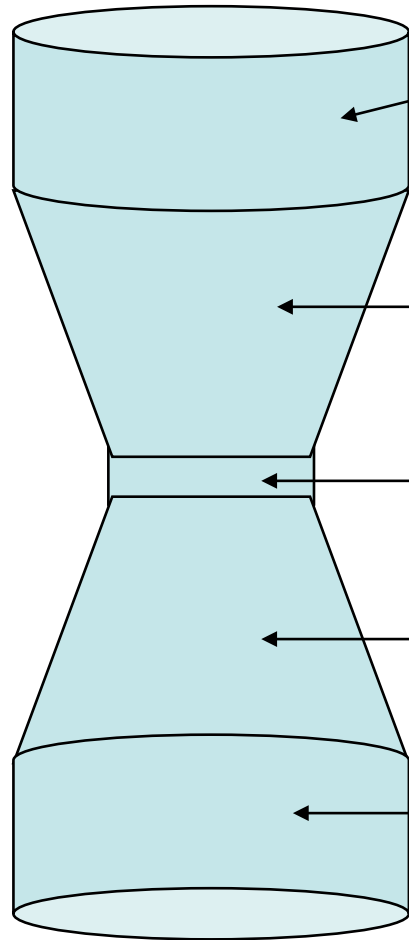


Structuring the Introduction: The Funnel Analogy

1) Picture two funnels connected by their narrow tips.



2) Begin by filling the top funnel with **background** information that explains where the research fits in the larger picture and why the research is important, i.e., *what is known*.

3) Funnel from there to what is *not known*: the **knowledge gap** your study is designed to fill.

4) Narrow even further by posing your specific **research question or problem**. You've now reached the junction of the two funnels.

5) From there, open back up again by first describing the **approach** you used to answer your question, and then the **major findings** your approach produced.

6) End with a broad statement of what your findings mean, i.e., the main **take-home message** or "bottom line"* of your paper.

**W. Wells. Me write pretty one day: How to write a good scientific paper (2004) J. Cell Biol. 165(6):757-758*