



UNIVERSITY OF  
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# The Introduction

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# Openings...

- It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife.
  - Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice* (1813)



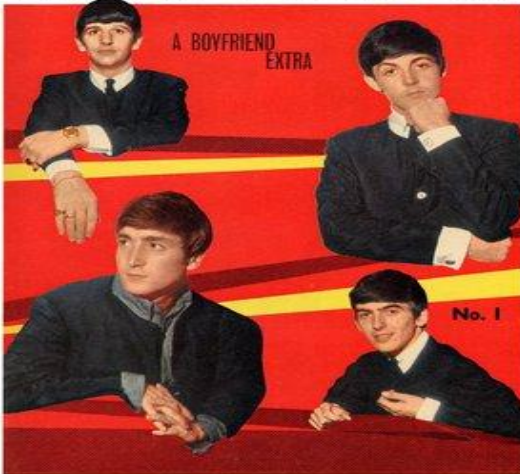
- Happy families are all alike; every unhappy family is unhappy in its own way.
  - Leo Tolstoy, *Anna Karenina* (1877)



# Fast forward to 1960s



**DATE THE BEATLES!**



*According to a recent Nationwide survey:*  
**MORE DOCTORS SMOKE CAMELS**  
**THAN ANY OTHER CIGARETTE**

- At Framingham, Massachusetts, the National Heart Institute has been following 5,127 men and women aged 30 to 60 years in a study of factors related to the development of coronary heart disease (CHD) and hypertension. Data for a decade of follow-up studies of this population are available for analysis.
- From a study of those who have developed disease under observation in comparison to those who have remained free of the disease, factors of risk and susceptible individuals have been identified. *The factors associated with excess risk that have been identified are: serum cholesterol level, blood pressure, cigarette smoking and vital capacity.*

# Basic elements of an Introduction

- 1 Provide a brief discussion of the general topic:  
Why is it important?
- 2 Provide a brief discussion of prior work by you  
and/or others
- 3 Provide an explicit statement of your study  
question/hypothesis.

# Dissecting an Introduction

- Rates of death from coronary heart disease in the United States underwent profound secular changes during the 20th century.[1,2](#) After peaking around 1968, age-adjusted rates were cut in half. Two factors may have contributed to this decline.
- First, there have been substantial decreases in the prevalence of some major cardiovascular risk factors, including smoking, elevated total cholesterol, and high blood pressure.[3-8](#) However, the prevalence of both obesity and diabetes has increased alarmingly.[9-11](#)
- Second, there has been a revolution in the treatments for established coronary heart disease, with major breakthroughs in evidence-based therapies, including the use of thrombolysis, coronary-artery bypass grafting (CABG), coronary angioplasty and stents, and angiotensin-converting–enzyme (ACE) inhibitors and statins.
- The annual direct and indirect costs for coronary heart disease were \$142.5 billion in 2006, and they continue to rise.[12](#) Determining the respective contributions of prevention and therapy to the declines in mortality from coronary heart disease is therefore becoming increasingly important, for the purposes of both understanding past trends and planning future strategies. Estimates of the contribution from reductions in risk factors before 1990 have ranged from 50 to 54% in the United States[13,14](#) and from 44 to 76% in other industrialized countries.[15-22](#) However, to our knowledge, no U.S. studies have considered the dramatic changes since 1990 or have attempted to quantify the relative contributions of specific therapies and trends in risk factors.
- We therefore applied a model that has been used successfully in several other countries to examine trends in U.S. deaths from coronary heart disease between 1980 and 2000.

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# Why the Intro section matters?

- **You never get a second chance to make a first impression**
- **Your introduction is an important road map for the rest of your paper**
- **Ideally, your introduction will make your readers want to read your paper:**
  - They are quickly put at speed with the problem
  - They are being promised an interesting reading.



- **Start by thinking about the question (or questions) you are trying to answer**
- **Decide how general or broad your opening should be**
- **Try writing your introduction last**
- **Don't be afraid to write a tentative introduction first and then change it later**

- **Open with an attention grabber:**
  - an intriguing example
  - a provocative quotation
  - a puzzling scenario
  - a thought-provoking question
- **Pay special attention to your first sentence**
- **Be straightforward and confident**
- **Don't try to show readers that you have read everything**
- **Short, short, short**

# Thank You

