**Step 1: Explain your methodological approach**

Begin by introducing your overall approach to the research. What[research problem or question](https://www.scribbr.com/research-process/research-question-examples/) did you investigate, and what kind of data did you need to answer it?

* [Quantitative methods](https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/qualitative-quantitative-research/) (e.g. surveys) are best for measuring, ranking, categorizing, identifying patterns and making generalizations
* [Qualitative methods](https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/qualitative-quantitative-research/) (e.g. interviews) are best for describing, interpreting, contextualizing, and gaining in-depth insight into specific concepts or phenomena
* Mixed methods allow for a combination of numerical measurement and in-depth exploration

Depending on your discipline and approach, you might also begin with a discussion of the rationale and assumptions underpinning your methodology.

* Was your aim to address a practical or a theoretical research [problem](https://www.scribbr.com/research-process/research-problem/)?
* Why is this the most suitable approach to answering your [research questions](https://www.scribbr.com/research-process/research-questions/)?
* Is this a standard methodology in your field or does it require justification?
* Were there any ethical or philosophical considerations?
* What are the criteria for [validity](https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/types-of-validity/) and [reliability](https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/types-of-reliability/) in this [type of research](https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/types-of-research/)?

In a quantitative [experimental study](https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/experimental-design/), you might aim to produce generalizable knowledge about the causes of a phenomenon. Valid research requires a carefully designed study with a [representative sample](https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/sampling-methods/) and controlled [variables](https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/types-of-variables/) that can be replicated by other researchers.

In a qualitative ethnographic [case study](https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/case-study/), you might aim to produce contextual real-world knowledge about the behaviors, social structures and shared beliefs of a specific group of people. As this methodology is less controlled and more interpretive, you will need to reflect on your position as researcher, taking into account how your participation and perception might have influenced the results.