Introduction

Research Paper

Your introduction should include:
1. A statement of the problem
2. Brief motivation for working on the problem (i.e. why is it important/interesting?)
3. Background information and literature review (i.e. what information does your reader need to understand the problem? What work has already been done and why hasn’t the problem already been solved?)
4. General approach (i.e. is your method different from other approaches or do you follow another researcher’s approach?)

And may also include:
1. Main result and conclusions
2. A brief overview of the paper

Make sure you explicitly state what your own research is. This statement should receive emphasis and should not be buried mid-paragraph amongst background information.

Review Paper

Your introduction should include:
1. The focus and topic of the paper
2. Motivation for research in this area (i.e. why is it important/interesting?)
3. Background information (i.e. what information does your reader need to understand the problem?)

And may also include:
1. Brief overview of the paper

A straightforward theme for a review paper might be a simple chronology of a field or a presentation of what is known so far about a problem; a more complex approach might be to focus on a new method and contrast its possibilities with old approaches.

Background information

Research papers are usually written for scientists within the field. Elementary background information is not necessary. However, in order to tell a coherent story, you will certainly include information that your readers already know, particularly as you cover motivation for the work and work that has already been done in the area. Try to eliminate unnecessary details, however: quickly move from general background information to information that is specifically relevant to your own work. If you are writing a research paper that will be read by a more general audience (e.g. *Nature* or *Science* articles), more background information may be necessary. You may choose to include extensive background information in a separate section, or at the beginning of the section to which it is relevant.

Review articles are typically written for scientists out of field and do not have a captive audience. You should include more detailed technical background, which will also serve to motivate the research you are writing about.