

Writing Introductions

An effective introduction needs to set up your reader/s by establishing what the paper is about. It should include 4 basic elements:

- Engage the reader's interest and provide a brief background of the topic
- Provide a thesis statement (the position or argument you will adopt)
- Outline the structure of the essay
- Indicate any parameters or scope that will/ will not be covered

Read through the Sample Introduction 1. Think about which sentences perform which of the four functions listed above.

Sample Introduction 1

1Information technology is having significant effects on the communication of individuals and organizations in different professions. **2**This essay will discuss the impact of information technology on the communication of health professionals. **3**The essay will begin by discussing how information technology provides for the educational needs of nurses. **4**It will then explain how information technology can have significant effects on the role of general practitioner in the area of public health. **5**The essay will then consider the lack of knowledge about the potential of computers among hospital administrators and nursing executives. **6**The final section will explore how information technology is assists health professionals in the delivery of services in rural areas. **7**The essay will argue that information technology has significant potential to improve health care and medical education but health professionals are reluctant to use it.

Sentence 1:

Engages the reader's interest.

Sentence 2:

Indicates the general topic area.

Sentences 3-6:

Outline the main ideas (structure).

Sentence 7: Gives the thesis statement.

There is no sentence which limits the scope.

Please note you should not use numbered sentences, bold or italics in an essay. They are used here only as teaching tools.

Activity

Read through Sample Introduction 2. As you read identify what functions the different sentences perform and decide how well the writer has succeeded in engaging the reader's interest, limiting the scope (if applicable), setting out the main ideas, and providing a thesis statement. Check your assessment against the feedback given in the table underneath the Sample Introduction 2.

Sample Introduction 2

1 Popular representations of Australia like to portray it as the land of the “fair go”.
2 However “a fair go” has proved elusive for significant groups in Australian society. **3** This essay will examine inequality as experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. **4** Throughout Australia’s history, gender, access to education, unemployment and race have all been significant factors shaping inequality. **5** The discussion will be restricted to the factor of race. **6** After a brief look at nineteenth century ideologies of race the paper will present human rights as a more useful way to examine the relationship between race and inequality in Australia today. **7** The measure of inequality used in here is educational participation particularly as it relates to unemployment. **8** After examining the reasons for low rates of indigenous participation in education and the effects upon employment rates, there will be a brief discussion of other indicators of inequality such as income, housing and health status. **9** The essay will argue that race is still the most significant factor in causing inequality for indigenous people in Australia.

Sample Introduction 2 Breakdown

Sentence	Function	Comment
1-2	<i>Introduces the reader to the topic by engaging their interest</i>	The writer draws the reader into the essay by referring to a popular myth that most Australians have heard about, relating the essay to something the reader is likely to know.
3	<i>Provides background to the topic.</i>	The writer lets the reader know that the general topic area is the factors which cause inequality for indigenous Australians.
4-5	<i>Limits the scope of the essay.</i>	Inequality is a very broad topic so the writer shows awareness of the different causes of inequality and then informs the reader which aspect will be covered in the essay.
6-8	<i>Provides an indication of the essay structure.</i>	The main ideas are clearly set out in the order in which they will be discussed in the essay and provide the reader with a good idea of what the body of the essay will contain.
9	<i>Provides a thesis statement.</i>	The thesis statement is rather general. The author’s position could have been stated in a more focused way. For example: Institutionalised racism in the education system, even where it is not intended, continues to be the major cause of social disadvantage for indigenous people.

References

Academic Skills Centre, 2013, Writing an introduction and conclusion, University of Canberra, accessed 13 August, 2013, <http://www.canberra.edu.au/studyskills/writing/conclusions>

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