

## Writing an Introduction

The purpose of an introduction is to tell your audience what your essay is about. Your introduction should highlight your understanding of the question and outline how your essay will address key issues. Ultimately, introductions are designed to clarify the topic so that the reader can anticipate what lies ahead in the rest of the essay.

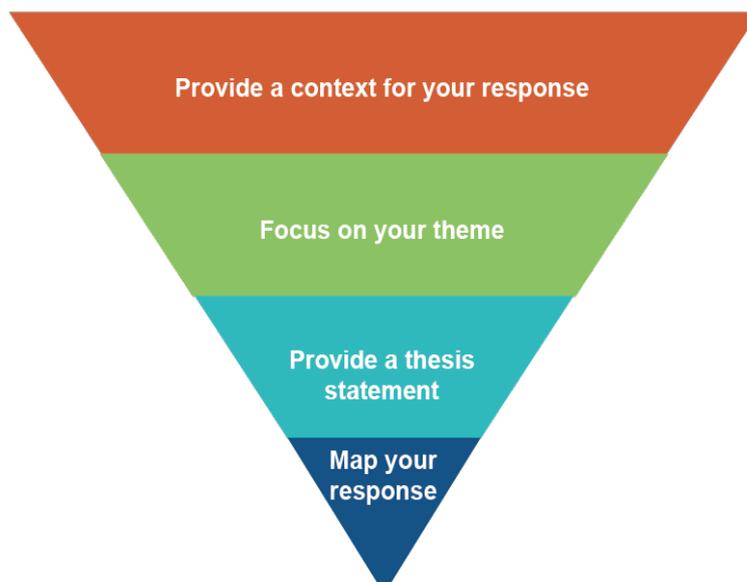
### An introduction must always:



- Interpret the question or topic
- Define key words or concepts contained in the essay question
- Outline what the essay will talk about
- Limit the scope of the essay

*Reword the question in the first sentence of your introduction and don't be afraid to use the key (content) words from the question throughout your introduction (and indeed your essay). This will show that you are attempting to directly respond to the question, and will help keep you on track!*

### This image clearly outlines the basic structure of an introduction:



## What makes an introduction good?

“A good introduction is successful because it allows readers to prepare themselves mentally for the journey they will undergo as they follow your argument through the paper... it enables them to recognize and understand the major points of interest in your argument” (Germov, 2000, p. 184).

### This is an example of a well-structured introduction:

Computer technology has made a dramatic difference to the nature of training delivery and administration.	ORIENTATION/CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION
However, it is simplistic to suggest that the role of the Human Resource Development (HR) professional will be usurped.	ADDRESSES QUESTION/FOCUSES THE THEME
Rather, while effective computer-based training has a place in the HR function, the human element is still essential to staff training.	THESIS STATEMENT
It is becoming increasingly evident that [1] technological developments are not without limitations, and that [2] the most successful approach is to blend traditional instruction with self-paced computer learning. Furthermore, [3] HR professionals still have a significant role in training needs analysis, course design & evaluation.	MAP OF RESPONSE
This discussion focuses on e-learning (or online learning), as it is the most controversial development and is having the greatest impact on the training function.	SCOPE STATEMENT

(Adapted from McNeil, 2006).

### Remember:

- You can't write an introduction until you fully understand the question and develop an appropriate, well-structured scaffold.
- Pay attention to the “direction word” (e.g. discuss, analyse, explain, evaluate) in the essay question. This will tell you what you need to do in your essay.
- Focus on the topic from the first sentence and be sure to maintain that focus. If you deviate by accident, there's a good chance that you won't answer the question. A good way to avoid this is to integrate key words from the question throughout your discussion.
- As a general rule, avoid using in-text references in an introduction. The introduction should convey YOUR understanding of, and approach to, the essay topic.

### References:

Germov, J. (2000). *Get great marks for your essays* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). St Leonards, N.S.W: Allen & Unwin.

McNeil, K. (2006). *Newcastle Graduate School of Business: Student manual 2006*. Newcastle: University of Newcastle.

## Planning an Introduction

ORIENTATION/CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION	
THESIS	
MAP OF RESPONSE	
SCOPE STATEMENT (What are the limits of your argument?)	