

ES1103

English for Academic Purposes



TUTORIAL 4 (PART B)

Centre for English Language Communication

Course Coordinator:
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Writing Introductions

Tutorial Learning Outcomes

By the end of this tutorial, you should be better able to:

- recognise the specific structure of an introduction
- analyse introduction samples
- construct an introduction
- write an introduction for your CA2

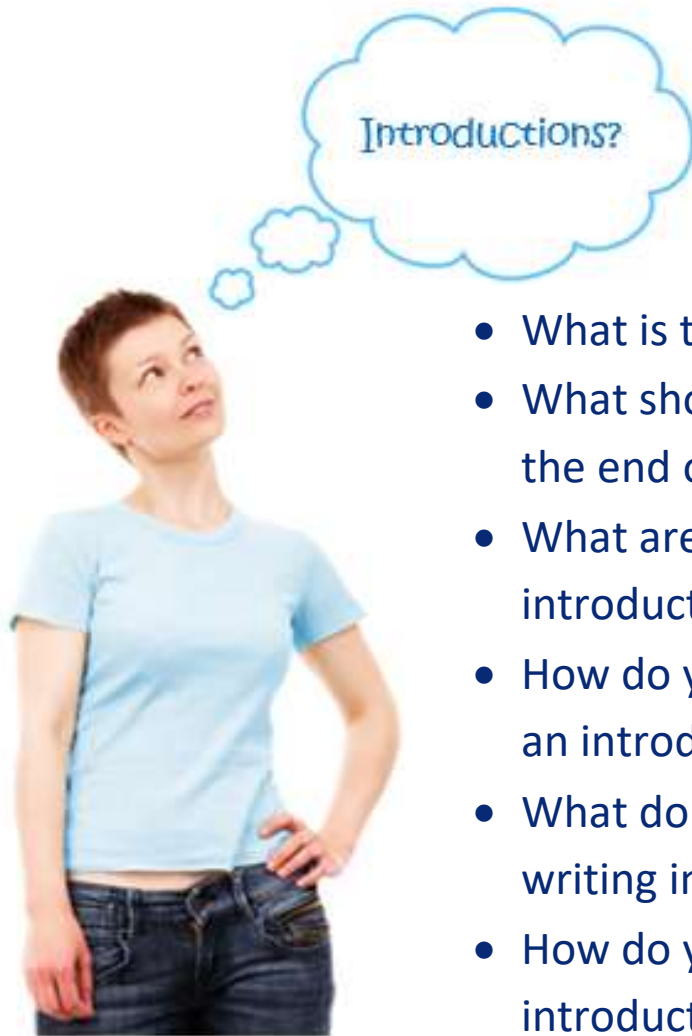
Introduction

A good and effective introduction is essential for getting any academic paper off to a strong and purposeful start. It is the first contact the writer has with the reader, and it provides an indication and an insight into the purpose, direction and quality of the paper.

However, you, like many other writers, have perhaps often struggled with how to begin your essays and other academic writing. For this reason, we focus on understanding the purpose of an introduction and consider some techniques that you can apply to ensure your introductions are written to the required standards expected in scholarly writing.

To begin, let's **reflect on what you understand about written introductions** and how you approach writing them.

Consider the following questions.



- What is the purpose of an introduction?
- What should the reader be clear about by the end of the introduction?
- What are the elements expected in an introduction?
- How do you decide what should go into an introduction?
- What do you find most difficult about writing introductions?
- How do you decide how to begin your introductions?
- Do you have any specific techniques or strategies you apply when writing introductions? If so, what are they?

The Purpose of an Introduction

A well-written introduction to an essay or academic text provides the **context** and **rationale** for the paper. It should state very clearly what the paper is about and why it is worth reading.

By the end of the introduction, your reader should understand **what you are going to say** and **how you are going to show** that the conclusion you reach is logical.

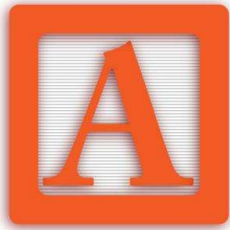
Your essay is a journey that you take your reader on; and it's always sensible to begin a journey with good preparation.



Your introduction must **prepare your reader for what is to come.** They should know where you are taking them and how you are going to get there.



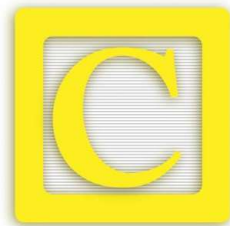
To start your essay effectively, your introduction must provide the reader with some key information. Experienced readers of academic papers will have specific expectations and **you must meet these expectations if your introduction is to be successful.**



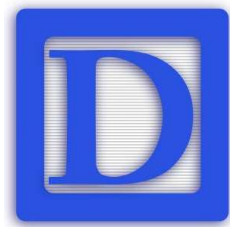
You must include an **overview of what is known about the issue**. You can do this by summarising the most up-to-date knowledge **to set the context** for the essay.



Once the context is set, **illustrate why it is an important issue**, one that is worth considering.



You must **show your stance**, your position or point of view on the issue clearly and unequivocally. Stating the stance will help the reader understand some of the choices you make in your paper.



Show what the reader will learn from you. Show how you will advance the reader's knowledge or thinking on the issue.

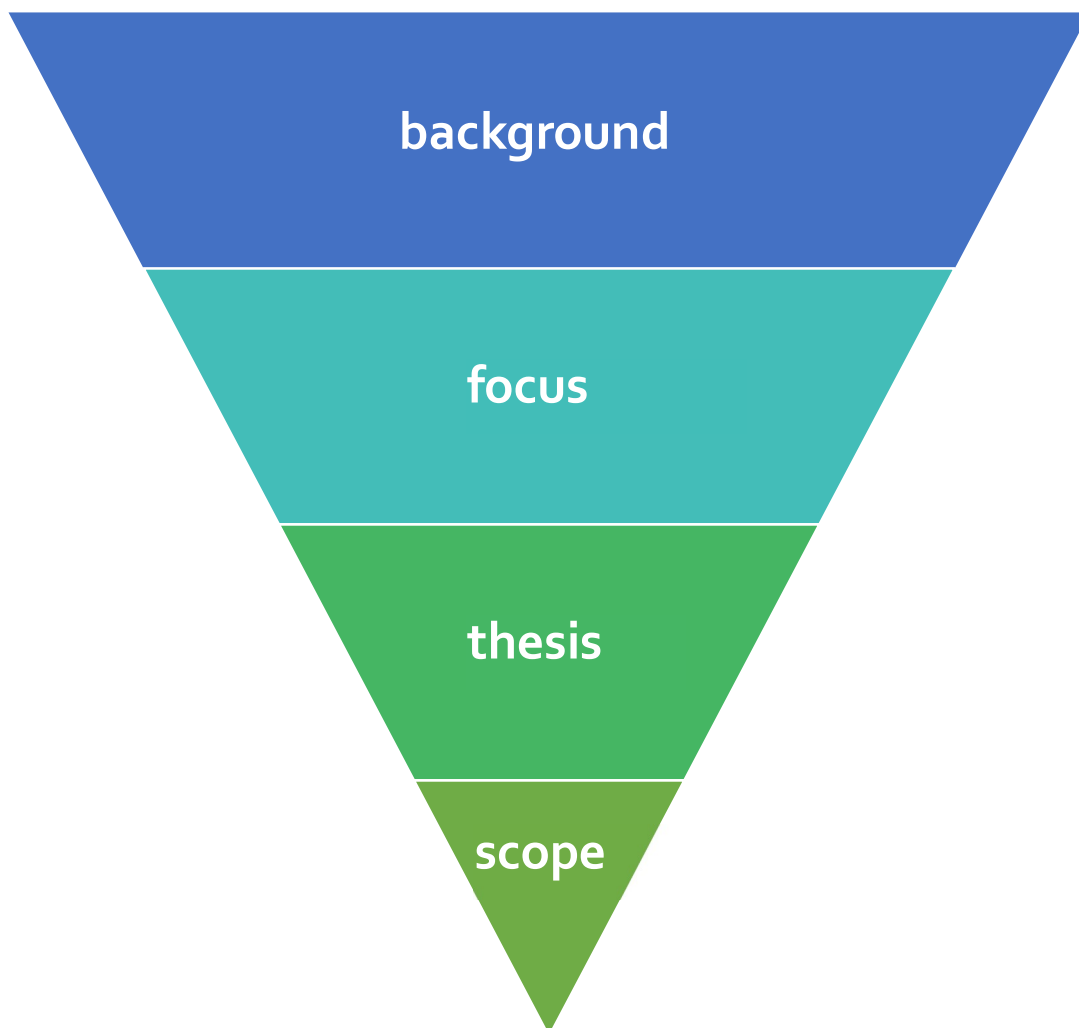


Outline the scope and direction of the paper so that your reader knows what will be included and how you will present these things.

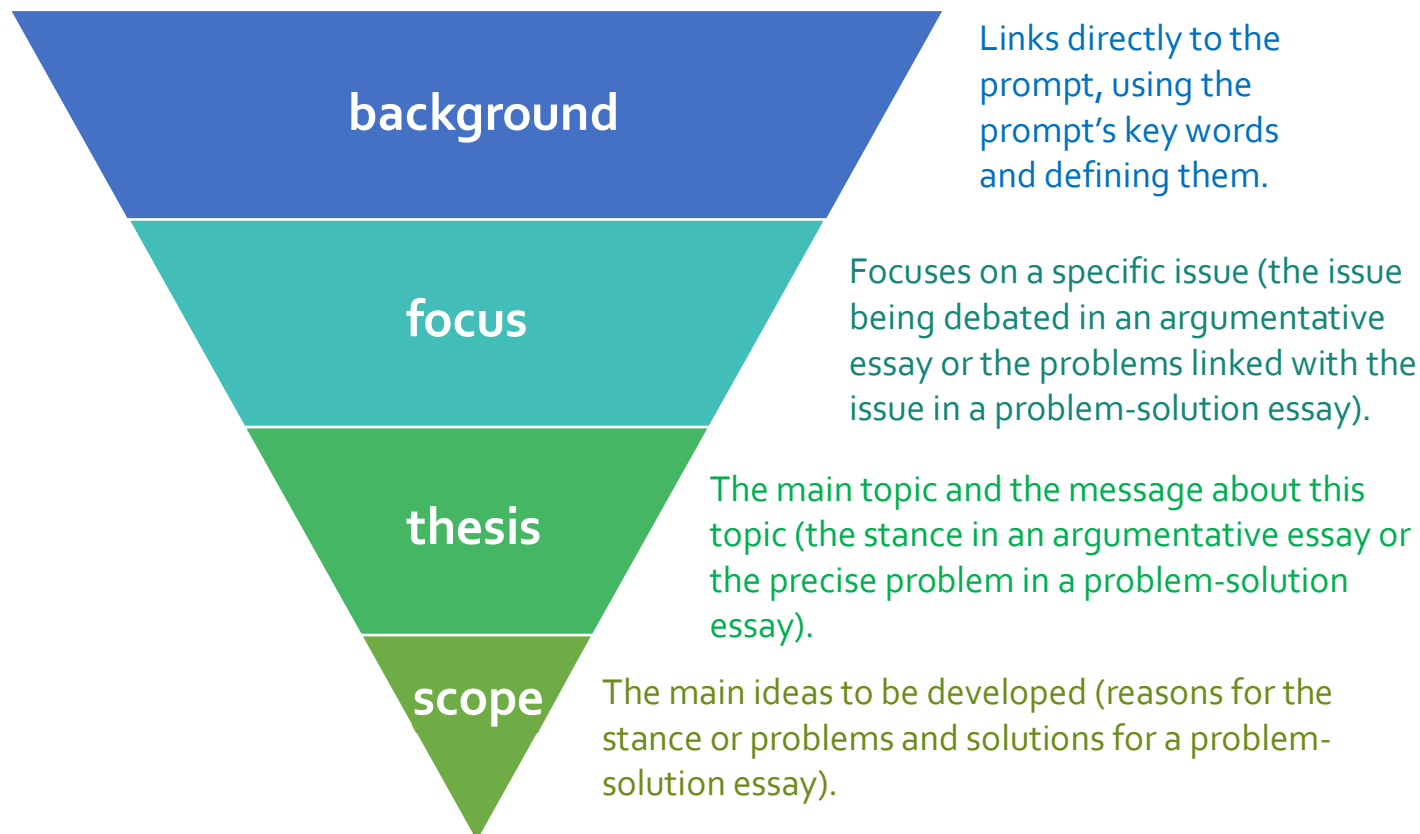
The Structure of an Introduction

Now that you have an idea of the purpose of an introduction, let's focus on how you can develop an effective structure for your introductions.

The most common structure of an introduction can be represented by **an inverted triangle** with the broadest part at the top giving **general** information and the narrowest part giving the **specific** problem or issue being addressed.



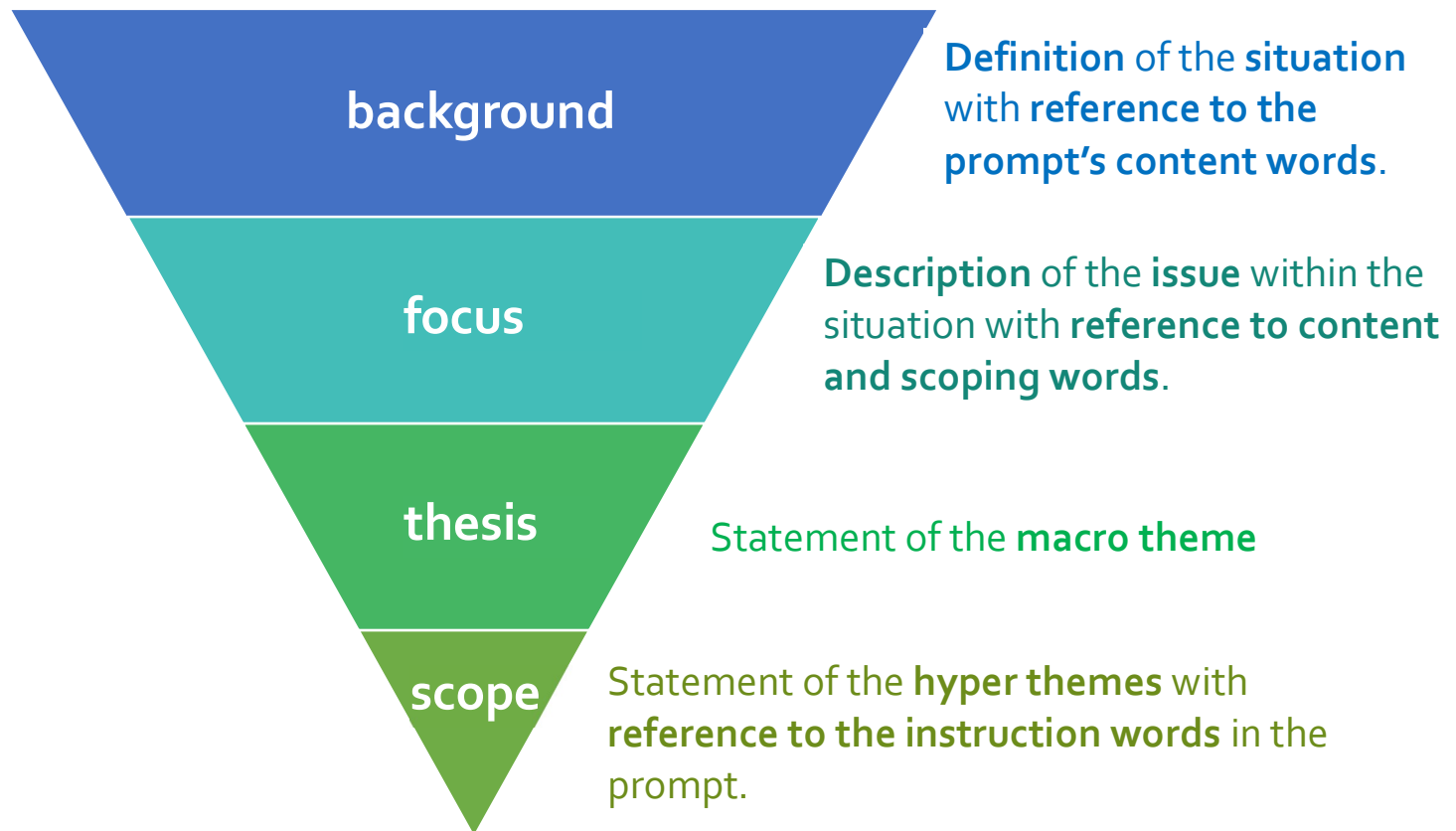
Consider now **what should be included in each segment** of the introduction triangle.



Your introduction should be **an announcement of what is to come in the subsequent paragraphs**. Therefore, always make it obvious to the reader what your conclusion is likely to be and show how you intend to reach that conclusion.

There should be no surprises or mysteries in an academic paper. After reading the introduction, **the reader should be in no doubt as to the purpose, the context, the focus, the stance and the direction** of the writing.

The introduction must **make clear reference to the prompt** so the reader can see how closely the prompt is being addressed in the text.

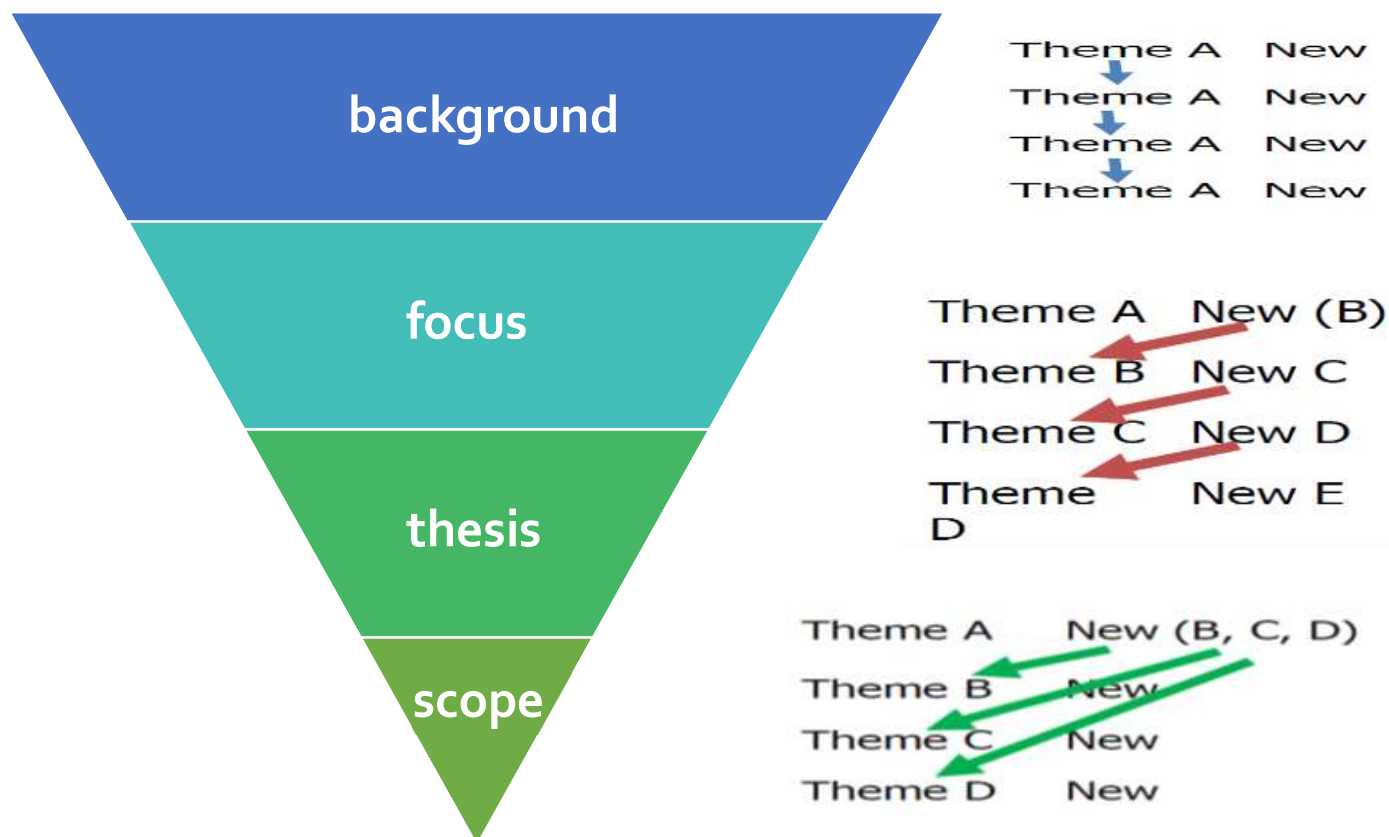





You should **always make full use of the essay or assignment prompt** to guide you in understanding what should be included in your introduction. The introduction should **fully address all of the key elements in the prompt**.

By addressing the prompt in your introduction, you will **show your reader how relevant and specific your writing is** to the task that you have been given.

In the previous tutorial, we focused on **cohesion** within texts. Let's apply something you learnt about cohesion to the structure of an introduction.

Consider how the **three common patterns of paragraph progression** (linear, zigzag, fan) might be used in an introduction.



Linear Progression	Zigzag Progression	Fan Progression
		

Addressing the Prompt in Your Introduction

Remember, the **starting point for any written assignment is the prompt** you are given. The prompt will suggest how you should proceed and what the introduction should include.

In a previous tutorial, we noted the importance of paying attention to particular words with specific functions in essay prompts. These are content words, scoping words, instruction words and value words.

Task 1

Look at the essay prompt given below.

Identify the following items in the prompt

- content words
- scoping words
- instruction words
- value words

Be prepared to discuss your response in your tutorial.

In his TED talk, Goldin mentions a number of problems that have resulted from rapid globalisation, among them the collapse in biodiversity, climate change, financial crisis and inequality (2009). What do you think is the most serious problem facing the world as a whole? Refer to ONE of the problems mentioned by Goldin in his TED talk and describe some actual or possible measures to alleviate this problem.

Evaluating an Introduction (1)

Consider the prompt above and the key words you have identified. Now that you have some idea of what should be included in the introduction of an essay responding to that prompt, complete the task below.

Task 2

Read the introduction in response to the prompt on page 9.

Evaluate the introduction.

- Do you think the introduction addresses the prompt clearly?
- What reasons do you have to support your evaluation?

Be prepared to discuss your response in your tutorial.

Globalisation promotes integration – we see it in the convergence of economies and cultures; we see it in the far-reaching hand of commodities and media. But there is another less represented, more pressing manifestation of said integration that demands our attention and that is the homogenization of agroecosystems. Such a phenomenon occurs due to the prolific use of herbicide-tolerant seeds pharmaceutical corporations sell. Though many conventional farms buy into this, organic farms continue to hold out in their practice of ecological principles to ward off pests. In doing so, habitats maintain their vibrancy in supporting a myriad of organisms. The adoption of organic agricultural practices by farmers will therefore conserve agroecosystem biodiversity and stem the further loss of genetic variety.

Evaluating an Introduction (2)

Look at another example of a prompt and complete the task.

Task 3

Look at the essay prompt given below.

Identify the following items in the prompt

- content words
- scoping words
- instruction words
- value words

Be prepared to discuss your response in your tutorial.

In the last 20 years, rates of divorce have risen significantly in Western countries. Critically analyse some of the different explanations given for this phenomenon. In your discussion, you should consider what implications these explanations might have for social policy.



Always refer to the prompt.

Task 4

Read the introduction in response to the prompt on page 11.

Evaluate the introduction.

- Do you think the introduction addresses the prompt clearly?
- What reasons do you have to support your evaluation?

Be prepared to discuss your response in your tutorial.

A major change that has occurred in the Western family is an increased incidence in divorce. Whereas in the past, divorce was a relatively rare occurrence, in recent times it has become quite commonplace. This change is borne out clearly in census figures. For example, thirty years ago in Australia, only one marriage in ten ended in divorce; nowadays the figure is more than one in three (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1996: p.45). A consequence of this change has been a substantial increase in the number of single parent families and the attendant problems that this brings (Kilmartin, 1997). An important issue for sociologists, and indeed for all of society, is why these changes in marital patterns have occurred. In this essay I will seek to critically examine a number of sociological explanations for the 'divorce phenomenon' and also consider the social policy implications that each explanation carries with it. It will be argued that the best explanations are to be found within a broad socio-economic framework.

Introductions in Various Disciplines and Genres

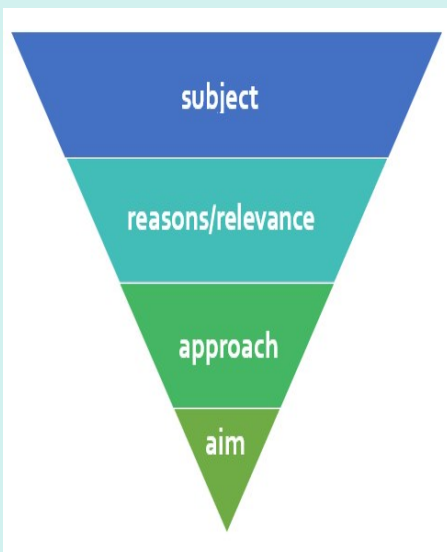
This tutorial has focused on introductions of essays. For an argumentative essay or a problem solution essay, you will use a very similar structure and a many of the features we have considered here.

For most genres, the introduction follows the inverted triangle structure from general to specific, but according to the purpose of the writing, introductions might follow slightly different stages.

Let's look at two variations in introductions.

Variation 1

The introduction for a **Life Science lab report** usually follows this pattern.



What is the topic?
What does the literature say about it?

Why is the subject important to study?

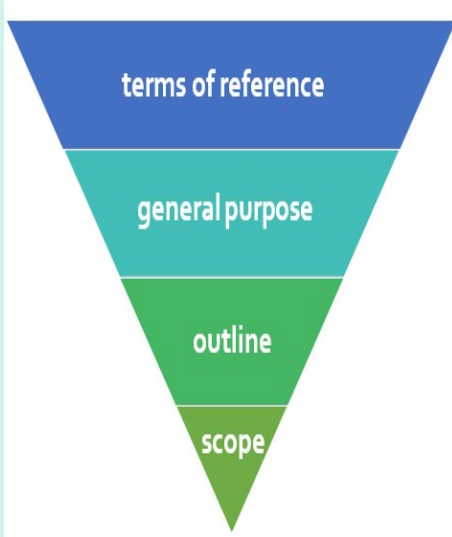
What is your approach and why?

What is the aim of the experiment?
What are you trying to find out?



Variation 2

The introduction for a **field trip report in Engineering** tends to follow this pattern.



Who asked for the report and why?
Date and location of the field trip.

What will the report achieve?

What key topics will the report contain?
What is the purpose of each section?

What are the boundaries of the report?



It is always useful and advisable to analyse introductions to the different academic texts that you are required to read as part of your disciplinary modules. Notice how the introductions are structured and the flow of ideas. What patterns can you discern?

Once you have identified the common structures and features of introductions in your disciplinary reading, you should use these as templates for constructing your own introductions.

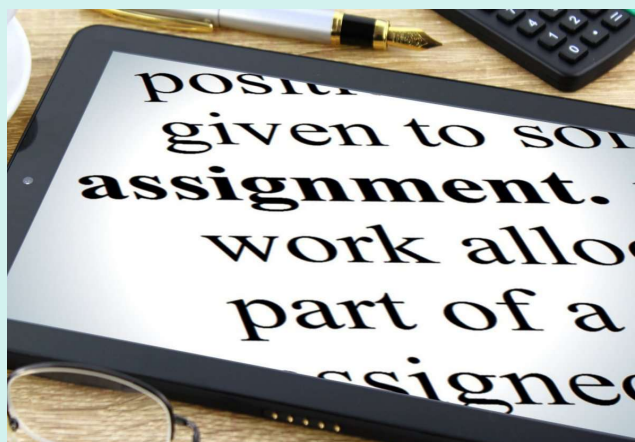
CA2 Problem-Solution Essay (Part 1)

Now we turn to combining all of these skills for writing the first half of your problem-solution essay.

Analyse the prompt and use it as a guide for what to include in the introduction to your essay.

CA2, CA3 CA4 and CA5 essay prompt

Using your disciplinary content (or any other theme you choose), describe ONE specific problem connected with an issue of interest to you, explaining what, in your view, the problem is. Your problem should focus on a particular community or country. Where possible, evaluate one or more existing approaches which address your chosen problem and suggest one or more new or improved measures which may further mitigate it.



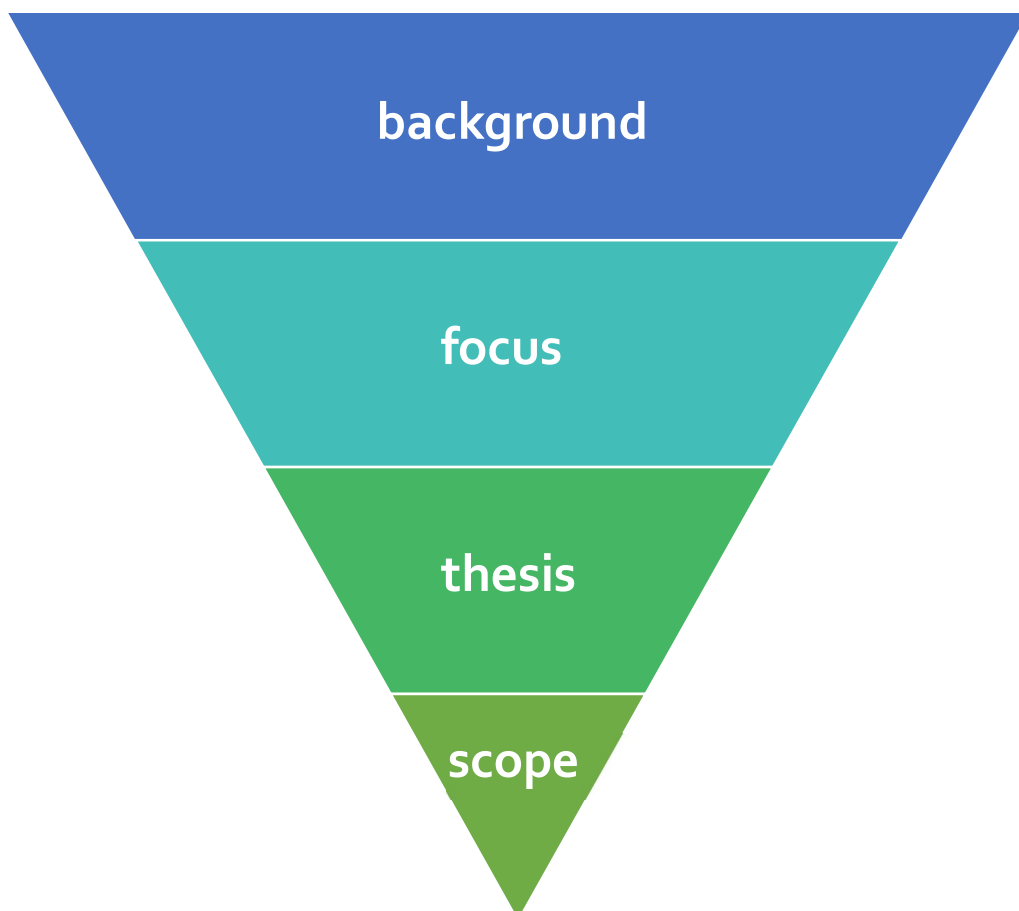
Task 5

Draw a large inverted triangle to represent the structure of the introduction to your essay (CA2).

Write points or brief notes on the following moves.

- background
- focus
- thesis (macro theme)
- scope (hyper themes)

Remember to address the prompt closely.





- Start working on the first draft of CA2.
- Upload the first draft to the CA2 submission folder on Canvas.
- Submit your CA2 by the scheduled deadline stated on Canvas.
- Run a plagiarism check and consult the report, and amend your CA2 if necessary.

In this tutorial, we have considered some key features of introductions and have noted common techniques for developing well-structured, focused and informative introductions. By applying these techniques, you will become more proficient and more successful at writing introductions that guide both you and your reader from the outset of your writing task.