

Writing Introductions

Objectives

When you have finished this section, you will be able to:

- recognize the specific structure of an introduction
- analyze introduction samples
- joint construct an introduction
- write an introduction individually

Before class

Survey the webpages in the following website and answer the questions that follow.

<http://writesite.elearn.usyd.edu.au/m3/m3u3/index.htm>

1. What is the purpose of an introduction? What should the reader be clear about by the end of the introduction?
2. What are the elements expected in an introduction?

In class

Analyse the prompt and read the sample introduction. How would you evaluate the introduction?

As a reader, do you think the introduction addresses the prompt clearly?

content, **scope**, **instruction** and **value** words

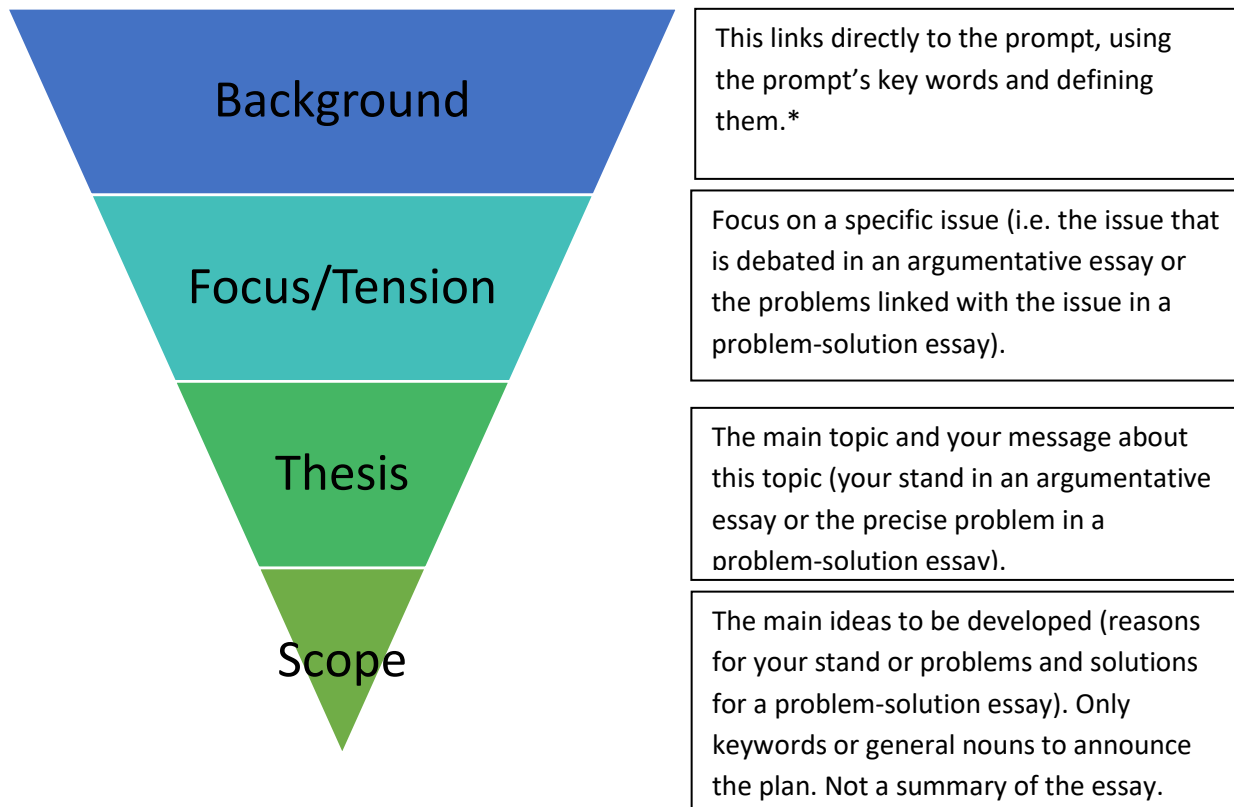
Prompt: In his TED talk, Goldin mentions a number of problems that have resulted from rapid globalisation, among them the collapse in biodiversity, climate change, financial crisis and inequality (2009). What do you think is the most serious problem facing the world as a whole? Refer to ONE of the problems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

Sample introduction:

Globalization 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.

Look at other examples on <http://writesite.elearn.usyd.edu.au/m3/m3u3/index.htm>

An introduction usually follows the inverted triangle structure. This structure represents the progression from general to more and more focused content.



*In an academic essay, the background is rarely a question or an anecdote but rather a definition of the key terms or a statement regarding the significance of the issue.

Look at the following prompt and sample introduction. Are all the elements clearly present?

Prompt: Again quick analysis of the prompt (content, scope, instruction and value words).

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.

<p>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.</p>	
---	--

Joint Construction The whole class will work together to write an introduction.

Prompt 1:

Persisting low education levels have led to problems even in rich countries such as the USA. Discuss one problem linked with low educational levels in the USA and evaluate the existing solutions before suggesting new or improved measures.

Prompt 2:

The Internet has enabled a vast volume of information to spread from one person to the other and one side of the world to the other with incredible speed and ease and this has had some positive impacts. However, there are many problems associated with this fast, and uncontrollable spread of news/information. Discuss one problem and the potential solutions that could solve it.

Independent construction

Write an introduction for the prompt you did not use for joint construction.

Steps:

- Analyse the prompt
- Brainstorm ideas and organize them into paragraphs
- Start work on the introduction, including the expected stages and information.
- Share the introduction on your e-portfolio and give feedback to 2 classmates

Now, turn to your essay and apply these strategies to write an introduction paragraph.

Introductions in various disciplines and genres

The tutorial today has focused on introductions of essays. For an argumentative essay or a problem/solution essay, you will use a very similar structure and language to what we have seen today.

For most genres, the introduction follows the inverted triangle structure (from general to specific), but according to the text purpose, introduction may follow slightly different expected stages.

For example, the introduction for a **life Science lab report** usually follows this pattern:

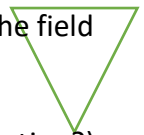
1. Subject/literature (what is the topic, what does the literature say about it?)
2. Reasons for experiment/relevance (why is the subject important to study?)
3. Experimental approach? (What is your approach and why?)
4. Aim (what is the aim of the experiment, what are you trying to find out?)



http://www.usyd.edu.au/learningcentre/wrise/biology/introduction/intro_structure.html

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

1. Terms of reference (who asked for the report and why? Date and location of the field trip)
2. General purpose (what will the report achieve?)
3. Outline (what key topics will the report contain, what is the intention of each section?)
4. Scope (what are the boundaries, what is the report not covering?)



http://www.usyd.edu.au/learningcentre/wrise/mining_engineering/introduction/intro_entry_quiz_ex.html

You will find more information on the structure of various genres (case studies, lab reports, literature reviews, reflections, book reviews and so on) on:

<http://www.uefap.com/writing/genre/genrefram.htm>

For **Science and Engineering** students, there is useful information, sample texts and practice tasks on the following website:

<http://www.usyd.edu.au/learningcentre/wrise/>

Prepare your presentation/ share your essay outline. Focus on Part 1 of your essay: the problem (cause, impact). Show the sources you have found (include some academic ones). What type of evidence of the seriousness of the problem will you be developing?

What are the current solutions and what would be improved solutions?

Depending on the format adopted by your class, prepare to talk for about 8 minutes or to share your outline for feedback.