<table>
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<th>Slide Number</th>
<th>Image</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td><img src="image1.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td>Hi, I’m Sophie from Writing@Liverpool.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td><img src="image2.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td>Our tutors can help you with advice about planning and structuring your essays. This resource looks at writing your introduction. It can be daunting starting a new essay or a new piece of work and it’s often difficult to know where to begin.</td>
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Remember, your essay is made up of separate parts. Think of your essay like this burger. The introduction and conclusion are the bun and they provide the framework for the essay and they hold it all together. The meat that goes in the middle is your main argument. Remember your introduction should be around 10% of your total word count, so if you are writing a 2,000 word essay, you want your introduction to be roughly 200 words long.

But what actually needs to go into your introduction? Well introductions serve a clear purpose. They tell your audience some important details about the essay that they’re about to read and in this session we’ll look at three main areas.

Break down the question. Make sure that you fully understand what you’re being asked to do.
Look for words that instruct you to do particular things, such as compare or to provide examples. Also look if you’re being asked to talk about specific things. This might be to focus on the works of a particular author, a particular historical period, or a particular place. By addressing this in your introduction, you are telling the reader that you understand the task that has been set for you.

Define any key phrases or technical terms used within the essay title. So imagine your audience as somebody who is familiar with your general topic, but they might not be familiar with all the specific terminology relevant to your exact area of research. By defining any terms that you will be using in your introduction, you are letting the person marking your essay know that you understand what these terms mean and that you know how to use them correctly.

Tell your reader what your essay will consider and, if appropriate, what it is not going to look at and why.
Outline Your Arguments

Be upfront – use your introduction to state what your essay will argue e.g. Through an assessment of X, Y and Z, this essay argues that...

Top Tip:
Come back to this section once your first draft is complete.

Make sure you outline your arguments, so if you’ve been set an essay question, then what is your answer to it? What have you concluded from your research? If your assignment does not have a set question, then think about the claims that you are trying to make with your writing. What are the main points that you want your reader to take away? Remember, your introduction and conclusion should complement each other. In the strongest essays, state the main arguments in your introduction, use the main body to discuss them in further detail and the conclusion to confirm what has already been argued. Just a hint: this part can often be the most difficult but is usually a lot clearer once you’ve written out the middle section, so don’t be afraid to come back to your introduction once you have your first draft of the essay completed.

Key Points

1. Break down the question
2. Define key terms
3. Outline your arguments

To recap: Address the question, define any key terms and outline your arguments. And that’s it. If you found this video helpful, take a look at our other resources, which are available online.