

Writing effective introductions



University of
Southern
Queensland

Why is this important?

Academic writing should be clear and purposeful. Therefore, an introduction should tell your reader what content you intend to cover and how you will approach this.

How do I know what to include in an introduction?

An effective introduction needs to establish the context, content and structure of your assessment response. Refer to your task sheet and criteria sheet (or assessment rubric) to see the specifics of the task. You may be asked to do several things in a task such as an essay, case study or report. For example, you may need to discuss a theory or examine a code of ethics and then apply this to a supplied scenario. You will need to include information in your introduction about how you will address these various aspects. Some students find it easier to write the body paragraphs first, as having a clear idea of the points you have made may make it simpler to write an effective and logical introduction. An introduction is approximately 10% of your total assessment word count (unless specified differently).

How should I structure an introductory paragraph?

Provide a brief context to the assessment topic:

This engages the reader's interest and provide some background on the topic. If you have been given more than one topic or situation from which to choose, remember to make it clear in the introduction, what you have chosen to address.

Provide a thesis statement (if required):

A thesis statement does more than describe what your assignment will be about or simply restate the assessment question. It asserts the position or line or argument you will take on the assessment topic, for example, stating whether you agree or disagree with the topic. Depending on the assessment task, a thesis statement may not always be required, however if this is not clear, it is best to check with your tutor.

Outline the structure of the assignment:

It is important to provide a clear and logical overview of what will be covered in your assignment response. Make sure you include all aspects of the task according to your task and criteria sheet.

Indicate any parameters or scope that will or will not be covered:

Defining the parameters of your discussion may not always be necessary depending on the assessment topic. However, where you have had some choice, for example in the issue or demographic you have chosen to respond to, it is important to make your decision clear, for example "This essay will apply the relevant theories and government policies to the issue of homelessness and youth justice".

Introduction paragraph example

“Graduate registered nurses require more than clinical skills to meet the needs of patients”. Critically discuss this statement. Relate it to the Nursing & Midwifery Board of Australia (NMBA) - Standards of Professional Practice (2016).

Nursing is a rewarding and demanding profession. In Australia, the profession is governed by Nursing & Midwifery Board of Australia (NMBA) - Standards of Professional Practice (2016) which provides a code of practice to protect both patients and nursing practitioners. It is recognised that appropriate clinical knowledge is vital for graduate registered nurses (RNs), however this paper will argue that RNs are required also to demonstrate multiple skills in addition to clinical competency to provide a safe and supportive patient environment. Three skills will be critically discussed, these are communication, teamwork and critical thinking. Each of these skills will be justified by relating them to the relevant NMBA codes and guidelines and competency standards.

Context

Thesis statement

Structure overview

Scope

Example of an effective thesis statements

Assessment task: ‘Critically analyse the factors contributing to the disproportionate rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ incarcerated in contemporary Australia’.

‘This essay will **outline** the major factors responsible for Indigenous incarceration in contemporary Australia’.

‘This essay will **argue** that structural inequality and intergenerational trauma are major factors in the overrepresentation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander peoples in incarceration in contemporary Australia’

Final check list

- Have I provided a brief but clear background to the topic?
- Does my thesis statement use precise and specific language to clearly identify my position?
- Is my structure clearly signposted?
- Have I defined any necessary scope or parameters to the discussion?

Further support

Contact your student learning advisors via the Support for Learning team here:

supportforlearning@unisq.edu.au

Ph: +07 4631 2372