

WRITING AN ESSAY INTRODUCTION

Good introductions:

1. provide background information that engages the reader's interest
2. indicate in general what the essay is about
3. outline briefly the main ideas dealt with in the essay
4. provide a thesis statement

ACTIVITY 1

Read the Introduction below. Identify which of the numbered sentences perform the functions listed above. Then go to the next page of this information flyer and check how well you did.

¹Information technology is having significant effects on the communication of individuals and organizations in different professions. ²This essay will discuss the impact of information technology on the communication of health professionals. ³The essay will begin by discussing how information technology provides for the educational needs of nurses. ⁴It will then explain how information technology can have significant effects on the role of general practitioner in the area of public health. ⁵The essay will then turn to consider the lack of knowledge about the potential of computers among hospital administrators and nursing executives. ⁶The final section will deal with how information technology assists health professionals in the delivery of services in rural areas. ⁷The essay will argue that information technology has significant potential to improve health care and medical education but health professionals are reluctant to use it.

ACTIVITY 2

Read through the Introduction below. As you read identify which functions the different sentences perform and decide for yourself how well the writer has succeeded in engaging the reader's interest, limiting the scope, setting out the main ideas, and providing a thesis statement. Check your assessment against the feedback given underneath the introduction.

¹Popular representations of Australia like to portray it as the land of the "fair go". ²However "a fair go" has proved illusive for significant groups in Australian society. ³This essay will examine inequality as experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. ⁴Throughout Australia's history, gender, access to education, unemployment and race have all been significant factors shaping inequality. ⁵The discussion will be restricted to the factor of race. ⁶After a brief look at nineteenth century ideologies of race I will present human rights as a more useful way to examine the relationship between race and inequality in Australia today. ⁷The measure of inequality used in the paper is educational participation particularly as it relates to unemployment. ⁸After examining the reasons for low rates of Indigenous participation in education and the effects upon employment rates, I will briefly discuss other indicators of inequality such as income, housing and health status. ⁹The essay will argue that race is still the most significant factor in causing inequality for Indigenous people in Australia.

ANSWERS TO ACTIVITY 1

Sentence 1 engages the reader's interest. Sentence 2 indicates the general topic area. Sentences 3-6 outline the main ideas. Sentence 7 gives the thesis statement. There is no sentence which limits the scope in this example.

FEEDBACK FOR ACTIVITY 2

Sentences: 1-2

Function: Introduces the reader to the topic and engages the reader's interest.

Comment: The writer draws the reader into the essay by referring to a well known Australian myth. Relating the essay to something the reader is likely to know about is a good way to start an essay.

Sentence: 3

Function: Sets out the general topic area.

Comment: The writer lets the reader know that the general topic area deals with the factors which cause inequality for Indigenous Australians.

Sentences: 4-5

Function: Limits the scope of the essay.

Comment: Inequality is a very broad topic so the writer shows that she is aware of the different causes of inequality and then tells the reader which aspect will be dealt with in the essay.

Sentences: 6-8

Function: Provides an indication of the main ideas and the order in which they will be addressed.

Comment: The main ideas are clearly set out and provide the reader with a good idea of what the body of the essay will contain.

Sentence: 9

Function: Provides a thesis statement.

Comment: The thesis statement is rather general. The author's position could have been stated in a more focussed way. For example:

Institutionalised racism in the education system, even where it is not intended, continues to be the major cause of social disadvantage for Indigenous people.

RESOURCES

- Associated QUICK TIPS FOR STUDENT <http://www.usq.edu.au/learningcentre/tips.htm>
 - The Essay – an overview
 - Writing a paragraph
 - The thesis statement within an essay
 - The essay body and conclusion
- Online resources:
<http://www.usq.edu.au/learningcentre/alsonline/assessment/assign/assigntypes/essay.htm>
- Talk with a tutor at The Learning Centre (tlc@usq.edu.au)

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E: tlc@usq.edu.au
W: www.usq.edu.au/learnteach/learnsupp/

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