

EAP111: Writing

In this lesson, you will...

- Learn the purpose and structure of an introduction in the context of EAP writing
- Prepare to write an introduction

Writing introductions

In pairs, discuss the following questions about introductions to argumentative essays:

- A. Why do essays need introductions?
- B. What do introductions usually contain?
- C. Is there a 'template' for a good introduction (i.e. a set pattern you can use in any essay?)

Activity 1

In the introduction to an argumentative essay, you must present the issue clearly. You should also express your point of view and develop this through the essay.

You will look at two introductions. For each one, think about the following questions:

- A. Is the issue clear?
- B. Does the writer give their opinion?
- C. What are the strengths and weaknesses?

Is the issue clear?

Does the writer give their opinion?

What are the strengths and weaknesses of each one?

1. Many people think smoking is a human right. Other people think it is dangerous. I think smoking should be banned. I will explain my opinion below.
2. The issue of pollution is controversial. Some people feel that it causes a lot of problems for the global citizens of this world whereas others argue the case that it is necessary for the advancement of the human race. I agree that it causes problems and in the essay I will address all these concerns alongside refuting all counter arguments.

Although both of these introductions express an opinion, they are overly simplistic and generic.

You will read two more introductions on the topic of smoking, but before you do, spend a few minutes thinking about your own opinion on the topic:

Smoking is a serious danger to public health and should be banned in all public and private places.

Now look at the introductions on the next slide and think about the following questions:

1. Do they state the issue clearly and express an opinion on it?
2. Which introduction is more specific?

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Which introduction is more specific?

- We all know that smoking is an unhealthy habit for both the smokers and other people around them. There is no doubt that people should be encouraged to give up. Nevertheless, it is naive to think that a ban on smoking could be the answer. This kind of policy simply would not work. This essay will give a number of reasons why making smoking illegal is a poor solution to the problems that smoking creates.
- It may seem rather optimistic to believe that a total ban on smoking could be effective in improving public health, but taking this kind of approach is possibly the best strategy. I believe it is the case that most smokers actually want to give up but fail to do so as they don't have the willpower. Being as many government health campaigns and taxes have failed to have much of an effect, it may well be the case that a ban on the production, sale and consumption of cigarettes is the only way to save people from themselves.

Do they state the issue clearly and express an opinion on it?

Which introduction is more specific?

- We all know that smoking is an unhealthy habit for both the smokers and other people around them. There is no doubt that people should be encouraged to give up. **Nevertheless, it is naive to think that a ban on smoking could be the answer. This kind of policy simply would not work.** This essay will give a number of reasons why making smoking illegal is a poor solution to the problems that smoking creates.
- It may seem rather optimistic to believe that a total ban on smoking could be effective in improving public health, but taking this kind of approach is possibly the best strategy. **I believe it is the case that most smokers actually want to give up but fail to do so as they don't have the willpower. Being as many government health campaigns and taxes have failed to have much of an effect, it may well be the case that a ban on the production, sale and consumption of cigarettes is the only way to save people from themselves.**

Activity 2

Now let's look at another statement:

The best way to reduce traffic and pollution in cities is to get people to use public transport instead of private cars. Governments should make laws to ban private vehicles from city centres.

- Decide on your overall opinion.
- Think of as many related issues as you can and decide which you will focus on. If you like, you can use a 'mind map' to help brainstorm ideas.

Open Ended Question

Write your ideas below.

Model Introduction

Here is one possible way of writing an introduction to the essay statement from the previous slide:

Following the rapid growth of cities around the world, traffic and pollution have become a major problem. Some people argue that the government should take radical steps to address these problems, for example, by making laws to ban private vehicles from city centres. In this essay, it will be argued that although there are advantages to this approach, there are better alternatives to dealing with excessive traffic and pollution, such as introducing 'carpooling' schemes or taxing heavily polluting vehicles. The essay will begin by discussing the arguments for banning private vehicles, before arguing in favour of the alternatives.

Think about the following questions:

- A. What's the purpose of the first and second sentences?
- B. What is the writer's opinion?
- C. What will the writer argue first?

The Four Parts of an Introduction

Each colour represents a different part of the introduction. Can you guess what they are?

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1. General statement
2. Background sentence(s)
3. Opinion or 'thesis statement'
4. Overview

Now, let's look at this statement again:

The best way to reduce traffic and pollution in cities is to get people to use public transport instead of private cars. Governments should make laws to ban private vehicles from city centres.

Think about the 3 parts of an introduction. What will you write for each part?



Your draft introduction