

Introductions & Conclusions for Essays

Introductions

Introductions are the overview of the textual journey that you and your readers are about to embark on. The introduction is, therefore an important part of your writing as it grabs your readers' attention but can also tell them how well your thoughts are put together, how well-organized your piece is and how well you write. There is no fool-proof recipe for writing introductions. However, it must answer the following questions:

What am I going to discuss (Topic)? Why is it important (Purpose)? How am I going to approach this discussion (road-mapping)?

Topic – The topic is usually embedded in your task/instructions. It gives the reader some foundation of what you will be addressing in this essay. Sets context of the essay.

Purpose – The purpose is to give the reader an idea of the importance of the essay topic.

Road-mapping – Road-mapping is the process of explaining what will be discussed or covered in the essay. It is important to give the reader a view of the journey similar to the directions on a map.

Introductions should:

- Orient your reader(s) to your topic
- Set the context of your piece
- Raise the question you intend to answer in your piece
- State briefly the main points to be covered in your argument
- State your approach or position on the topic

Example:

Task: Reflecting on your future as a healthcare professional, discuss the value of being an integrated health professional (IHP) who is knowledgeable, empathic and reflective, while also practicing the ABC and D of dignity conserving care.

Introduction: Health professionals have different views of what it means to be a health professional and what skills they should have. Some believe that all that is needed to practice efficiently is specialised knowledge and technical skills. However, for health professionals to be competent, they need several different kinds of skills, not only technical expertise. They therefore need to be integrated health professionals (IHPs) that practice dignity conserving care. In this task, I will begin by describing two frameworks – the IHP framework and the ABC and D of dignity conserving care. I will use these frameworks to discuss why it is important for health professionals to be integrated health professionals and reflect on my thoughts and feelings as a developing IHP.

Conclusions



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Conclusions are often the most difficult part of a paper to write but they are important as they signify the end of a textual journey. The conclusion gives your reader something to take away with them and should indicate why the paper was meaningful and useful. It is also your final opportunity to make a good impression.

Conclusions should:

- Synthesise your main points
- Answer the question “So what?” (Use this as a starting point if you are stuck)
- Bring the reader full circle. Refer back to the purpose/s of your piece to provide unity
- Give the essay a sense of completeness
- Leave a final impression on the reader

Avoid:

- Merely summarizing your essay. You must critically engage with the message you are emphasising
- Introducing new ideas or including evidence that should be in the body of the paper eg. new references.

Example:

Task: (as above)

Conclusion: In conclusion, as can be seen from this discussion, if health professionals truly desire to be competent, efficient professionals, they need to be knowledgeable, empathic and reflective. They also need to practice dignity conserving care. The characteristics of an IHP and dignity conserving care are important as they affect how patients respond to health professionals. They also affect what patients think and feel about themselves. The IHP and ABCD frameworks are useful tools for developing health professionals to use, both now and when they eventually practice.

Compiled by the FHS Writing Lab, 2024.