Writing an Introduction & Conclusion

Introduction

Your introduction is important as it sets the tone of your essay. It should break down what the essay is about and summarise what the main body of the essay will cover. One method that you can use to write your introduction is the **What, Why and How** approach.

**What** - What is the essay about? This is where you explain what the purpose and focus of the essay is. Often you will be able to find this information in your assignment brief or in the essay question.

**Why** - Why is the topic of the essay being discussed? This is where you should consider why the topic is of relevance and importance within your field. This could also be classed as a rationale for your essay.

**How** - How will you approach the essay? This is where you should outline the main points that you would discuss within the essay.

When using this approach, you do not necessarily have to present it in this order. It depends on what makes the most sense for the topic that you are exploring.

**Example**

Examine the impact of physical inactivity on mental health (1000 words)

**[What]** This essay will review the relationship between physical inactivity and mental health. **[Why]** The UK government recommends at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity activity per week and two days of strengthening activities (Public Health England, 2019). However, 39% of adults are failing to meet the recommendations for physical activity (British Heart Foundation, 2017). A lack of physical activity increases the risk of individuals being affected by mental health and physical health conditions, with 1 in 6 UK deaths being attributed to physical inactivity (Public Health England, 2019). **[How]** This essay will critically discuss the impact of physical inactivity on depression, anxiety, self-esteem and stress. The essay will then go on to provide recommendations to promote and increase physical activity.
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Conclusion

Your conclusion gives the reader a summary of the ideas you covered in your assignment. At this point, you should not be introducing any new ideas or information.

In your conclusion, you should:

• Summarise each of your points from the main body of your essay.
• Summarise the main conclusions based upon the evidence you used.
• Link your conclusions back to the title of your essay – if you were asked a question, make sure that you have shown how you have answered it.

You might be asked to:

• Offer recommendations and/or solutions.
• Comment on broader implications for this area of study or research.

Example

Examine the impact of physical inactivity on mental health (1000 words)

[Summary of the essay] This essay has critically examined the relationship between physical inactivity on mental health. The impact of physical inactivity on depression, stress, self-esteem and anxiety has been discussed. [Main conclusion] Through the review of literature, it has been determined that a lack of physical activity can negatively affect mental health and in some cases, worsen symptoms. [Further research and recommendations] It is suggested that health education should be advertised to individuals susceptible to physical and mental health conditions. It is also recommended that healthy living programmes are integrated into workplaces and other high stress environments.
Tips for writing your introduction and conclusion

**Use it as a signposting opportunity** - If your introduction and conclusion are clear enough, it should direct the reader through the main body easily.

**Avoid being repetitive** - Whilst an introduction and conclusion cover similar areas, they are not the same. They both serve different purposes; therefore, they require their own attention.

**10% of your word count** - Unless you have been given a specific word count you’re your introduction or conclusion, each section should only be 10% of your word count (20% in total). The remaining 80% of the word count should be for your main body.

**Avoid going into too much detail** - You do not want to take anything away from your main body, where you will get the majority of your marks.

**Make sure that you are only mentioning relevant points** - If you are writing five hundred words in your introduction and your essay is 1000 words, then you may be going into too much detail and including irrelevant information.

References
