

## Guide to Writing Introductions

### Argumentative Vs Discursive

There are two main types of essay, argumentative and discursive. Discursive essays are very formal and expect you to remain unbiased until you have presented your information. Argumentative essays expect you to take a stand straight away. Please make sure you know what kind of essay is expected of you before you start.

	Argumentative	Discursive
Type of language	May include emotive language	Formal language
Point of view	Your own point of view	3 <sup>rd</sup> person and neutral
Example	Students spend too much time playing computer games.	This essay discusses if students should spend less time playing computer games.

### In an Exam

When you are in an exam you are often provided with some kind of question. The quickest way to make an introduction is to follow this step by step procedure.

#### 1. Change the question into a statement.

*Should students be made to clean the toilets?*



*Students should be made to clean the toilets.*

**Exam Maximiser:** If you can change the words, you will be showing **lexical resource** and be given extra marks by the examiner. (Lexical resource, means that you know a lot of words.)

#### 2. Do you agree or disagree?

When writing an argumentative essay. e.g. for IELTS or TOEFL then make your opinion known. If you agree then keep the statement positive, but if you disagree make the statement negative.

**Positive:** Students should be made to clean the toilets.

**Negative:** Students should *not* be made to clean the toilets.

## Discursive Essay

In a discursive essay you should try to make the introduction neutral.

*This essay discusses if students should be made to clean the toilets.*

### 3. Add Background information

Try to add some background to the question, if you can:

*In Japan, students are expected to clean their own toilets and the government believes that this practice may encourage students to be more respectful of their school environment. I believe that students should be made to clean the toilets.*

## Essays set for coursework

Outside of exam halls, direct questions may not be set and the teacher or lecturer may simply supply an area. For example, they might ask you to:

*Investigate an aspect of school hygiene.*

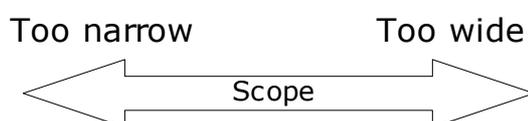
Other common words are:

- Investigate an area
- Research
- Look into
- Choose a topic

In these cases you have to come up with your own introduction. Before you can write an introduction you have to decide the *scope* of the essay.

### Scope of the essay

You want to set a scope that is neither too wide nor too narrow. For example surveying all the children in your country would be difficult, but just surveying yourself would show no effort on your part. A happy medium would be surveying the class.



For each essay there should only be one main point. This makes it easier to write the rest of the essay and to ensure that the essay flows properly from beginning to end. *You can now go to step 2 of the exam guide.*

## Cut Out Writing Questions

Do you think that people from certain ethnic backgrounds should be given greater access to education?

Do you agree with the death penalty?

Do you believe that Governments should censor the Internet?

What rights do you believe children should have?

Do you think that it is right for rich countries to pollute the environment?

Do you believe that men and women are equal?

Do you think it is important to preserve local languages and dialects?

Parents should limit children's time watching TV and playing computer games, do you agree or disagree?

Do you think that rich countries have a duty to stop starvation in the 3rd world?

How would you reduce traffic congestion in your hometown?

Do you think that advertising encourages people to buy things that they don't want?

(Based on IELTS questions)



## Teaching Ideas

1. Use the cut out shapes to encourage students to write introductions for the assignments.
2. Give students pictures and ask them to tell you what the main point of it is.
3. Give students newspaper cuttings with just the titles and ask them to write introductions.

## About Thesis Statements

In American essays they often look for *Thesis statements*. This is the main point of the essay and is essentially what is shown in steps 1 and 2. These statements are a useful way of ensuring that students have a clear idea of what they are writing.

## Common Types of Essay

### Examine an issue

Argumentative essays (Informal)	Persuasive Essays (both)
Discursive essays (formal)	

### Other common essay types:

- Compare & Contrast Essays – Looks at differences and similarities.
- Cause & Effect Essay – Why things happen and what happens as a result.
- Book Reviews – Includes a description and opinion of a book. It is also common to do game and Movie reviews.
- Descriptive Essays – Describe something in detail. Normally only children write these, because they build into stories, lab-reports and biological descriptions.
- Narrative – Another word for stories, but may also be used in journalism.
- Process Essays – Describes a process in science or engineering.