






Sample introductions

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|---|--|
|  Background to the topic |  Outline of the aims of the essay |
|  Quotation |  Definition of terms |
|  Suggestion of the conclusion the essay will reach | |

Sample 1

Introduction

In many ways, academic writing is unlike any other writing, even writing which may seem of a similar formality, such as business or legal writing. The demands of academic writing are specific, and usually clearly defined by the particular university department or school that will assess it. However, these demands often seem unclear or hard to follow for many university students. At the simplest level, the differences between academic writing and other writing are the expectations of the academics who will assess the paper. Therefore, it is essential for every university student to both know and practice the standard for writing expected at their institution.

This essay will give a brief description of the main factors that contribute to a well-written university-standard essay. It will first explain the importance of an effective essay-writing process, and suggest stages to use in an essay's development. It then goes on to highlight the factors that should be considered when attempting to structure an essay clearly. This paper explains the academic expectations of language to be used in university-standard writing. Finally, it looks at the issue of plagiarism, why it is of critical importance to avoid it, and some methods for doing so.

Sample 2

Introduction

What is an essay? An organised collection of your ideas about literary texts nicely written and professionally presented. In other words, the essay must be well structured (i.e. organised) and presented in a way that the reader finds easy to follow and clear. (University of Birmingham)

A report is a more highly structured form of writing than say, an essay, and is designed so that it can be read quickly and accurately. (University of Loughborough)

These two quotations, both from university study skills websites, seem to attribute the same qualities (well structured, easy to read) to the two different forms of writing this paper will evaluate: academic essays and academic reports. As it is unlikely that the only definition of an academic report is that it is *more* structured and *easier* to read than an essay, it seems clear that there must be a better or more definite distinction. Further the quotations do not tell us about the purpose of an essay or report, or why a student would choose one or other form. Hence, these quotes illustrate the way in which, to students, the difference in style and purpose of these two forms is not always obvious.

This essay will attempt to evaluate these two forms of academic writing in terms of appropriateness to particular academic tasks, and to differentiate them according to their purpose, form and content. It will show how well they give evidence to two specific forms of learning and consider whether they are appropriate for these in relation to other forms of assessment.

Sample 3

Introduction

In this paper, it is understood that 'academic writing' has the meaning as clearly given by Hopkins (2008) of "structured research' written by 'scholars' for other scholars (with all university writers being 'scholars' in this context)."

It is also important to consider, at this initial stage, the question of 'Are standards of academic writing among British students actually falling?' The Guardian Education Notebook (2008) reported "Academic standards are in decline in many British universities, Professor Geoffrey Alderman, a senior figure in higher education, told the press last month, 'Students who would once have failed pass, and students who would once have been awarded respectable lower seconds are now awarded upper seconds and even firsts,'"

There is a great deal of research being carried out to prove whether these claims are true. However, it is not the purpose of this paper to present this evidence. Instead, it will present two perspectives on this decline. The first suggests that falling academic standards are the result increased access to technology and therefore 'stealing' essays and cheating. Oppositely, the second perspective presented here suggests that a great deal can be done, and is being done, by universities to bring students up to expected standards and that modern technologies can greatly enhance an institution's ability to identify cheating and to facilitate access to skills training.

Finally, this essay will consider a rather sensitive subject: if standards of academic writing are falling that must suggest that either fewer students are achieving high grades, or that universities are applying laxer standards in assessing student work.