Planning and writing an introduction – Worksheet

A good introduction is essential in clearly setting the scene for a well-structured piece of academic writing. An introduction should let the reader know from the very beginning:

- **WHY** the topic/theme of the essay is important or relevant (orientation to the topic)
- **WHAT** your answer or argument is, or WHAT it is you will discuss or analyse (thesis or position statement)
- **HOW** you will support your argument or discussion (main points to be developed)

Your introduction should include the relevant **key words**, including **instruction words** from your assessment question/marking criteria, to show your marker that you are addressing the task AND to keep you on track.

### WHY
2–3 sentences:
- Broader context
- Overview of general topic/area of knowledge
- Explains WHY the information to be discussed is important/relevant
- May include definition/s and evidence from the literature

### WHAT
1 sentence
- Clear statement: WHAT exactly the paper is about/will do
- The thesis or position statement/answer/argument
- Use the key words from your assessment question including the **instruction word** (ie: evaluate/discuss/critically analyse)
- Consider restating your question

### HOW
1–2 sentences
- Explanation/statement of HOW you will achieve the WHAT. ie: the main points you will discuss to support/prove your answer/argument
- Use the key words from your question and marking criteria and mention them in the same order they will be discussed in the body paragraphs

### Example

Question: Avoidance of obesity is an important factor in maintaining health and retarding the progression of chronic disease. Discuss.

- **WHY**
  - Obesity is one of many factors that may contribute to decreases in health and vitality in individuals. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO) (2017), obesity is measured according to Body Mass Index (BMI) and defined as "abnormal or excessive fat accumulation that may impair health" (para.2).

- **WHAT**
  - This paper will discuss the importance of avoiding obesity in order to maintain health and retard the progression of chronic disease.

- **HOW**
  - The discussion will focus on the impact obesity has on the quality of life physically, psychologically, socially and economically.
Key words:

Instruction words:

WHY

WHAT

HOW