

Introduction to Essay Writing

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Forthcoming book: *Essentials of Essay Writing*
(Palgrave)

Session outline

- The philosophy behind academic work
- Basic marking criteria
- The research process
- Understanding how your brain works
- The introduction
- The paragraph/body
- The conclusion
- Integrating research
- Critical thinking
- Expression

The philosophy behind academic work

Why do universities exist?

- To write good essays it's important to understand why universities exist.
- **Question:** So, why do universities exist?
- **Answer:** To disseminate and create knowledge
- **Question:** What does this mean for you as a student?
- **Answer:** You need to embody this philosophy:
 - Identify worthy problems
 - Demonstrate knowledge/understanding of them (explore complexity)
 - Ultimately present your own informed opinions

Basic marking criteria

Basic marking criteria

- **Question:** What should you be attempting to demonstrate in your essays (what are essays code for)?
 - That you can answer the question.
 - That you have knowledge of your topic (research).
 - That you are intelligent (critical thinking).
 - That you can argue systematically (structure).
 - That you can express yourself clearly.

The research/writing process

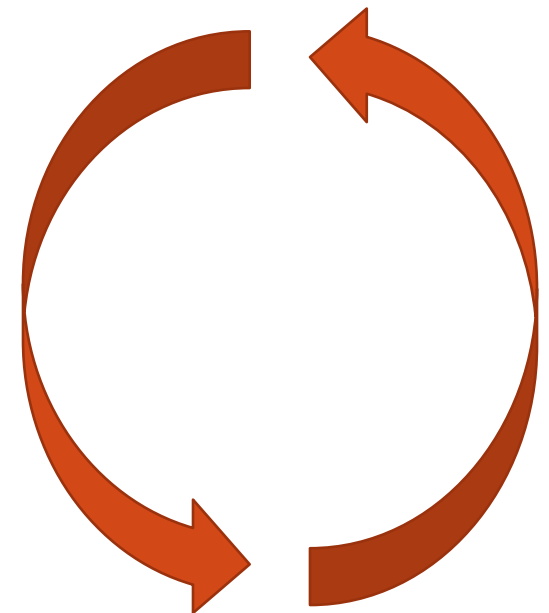
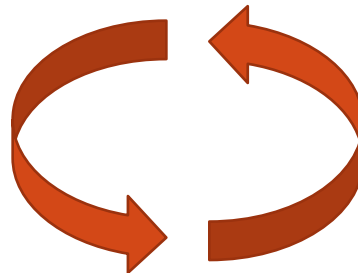
Beyond the assignment itself

- Be interested
- Do your readings and go to class: the 'five-fold' exposure to key ideas approach.
 - Do readings before your lecture.
 - Sit up the front in the lecture, pay attention and take notes.
 - Revise your notes after the lecture – write down questions.
 - Revise readings and notes before your tutorial.
 - Get involved in your tutorial – ask questions.
- Find out how the marker wants you to do the assignment.

The research/writing process

- Understanding the research process:

- Read the question
- Formulate a preliminary response
- Research with response in mind
- Make notes
- Generate a plan
- Write
- Set aside
- Make use of a friend
- Edit
- Submit



7 points to keep in mind in relation to assignment questions

1. Make sure you are answering the right question, copy the question correctly, and make sure you are following the instructions.
2. Answer the question, the whole question, and nothing but the question.

The question

- The three broad types of university questions:
 - Show knowledge
 - Eg: Describe the process of galvanising steel.
 - Explore complexity
 - Eg: Compare and contrast the various systems of local government revenue collection.
 - Make evaluations / present your own position
 - Eg: Evaluate the contributions made by discourse analysis and verbal report data in psychology.
 - Many questions combine all three
 - Eg: Compare and contrast the various systems of local government revenue collection and determine which one (if any) best protects local democracy.

7 points to keep in mind in relation to assignment questions

3. Read the question 50 times.
- **Question:** How might this question catch out a student?
‘With reference to Morgenthau, analyse what you believe to be the key principles of political realism.’

assignment questions continued

4. Be aware that teachers often inadvertently produce ambiguous questions.

- **Question:** Why is the following question ambiguous?

‘The bush legend and multiculturalism have provided two highly influential ways of thinking about Australian national identity.

However, these powerful concepts have also hindered our understanding of the complexity of Australian society. Discuss to what extent you agree or disagree with this statement.’

5. Use the language of the question in your response.

assignment questions continued

6. If possible choose a question which allows you to demonstrate critical thinking. (All questions are not created equal)
- **Question:** Which question encourages a critical response and why?

‘With reference to the chapter by Paul Christopher, what principles determine just conduct in war, according to Grotius?’

‘Why is republican government essential in order to achieve perpetual peace. Do you think it is a guarantee of perpetual peace? Discuss with reference to Kant.’

assignment questions continued

7. Identify and engage with the key concepts involved in the question as well as the tensions / key debates that surround these concepts. In other words, ask yourself why the question has been written.
- Example question: 'Is it wrong to laugh at the suffering of others?'
 - Tensions/debates:
 - The problem of reconciling the belief that we are good/civilised with the awareness that we might be unenlightened, power hungry brutes.
 - The possibility that laughter reveals our natures.
 - The question of whether laughter is ok so long as the person/creature is ok.
 - The question of whether laughter as punishment is acceptable.
 - The related issue of laughter being used as a political tool to reveal foolishness and cause suffering.
 - NB: Identifying these tensions/debates will help you determine the structure of your assignment.

The writing process: effective reading

- As discussed earlier:

READ WITH A PURPOSE

- Be an active reader.
- Read not only with the question in mind, but with a possible answer in mind.

The writing process: making notes from your research

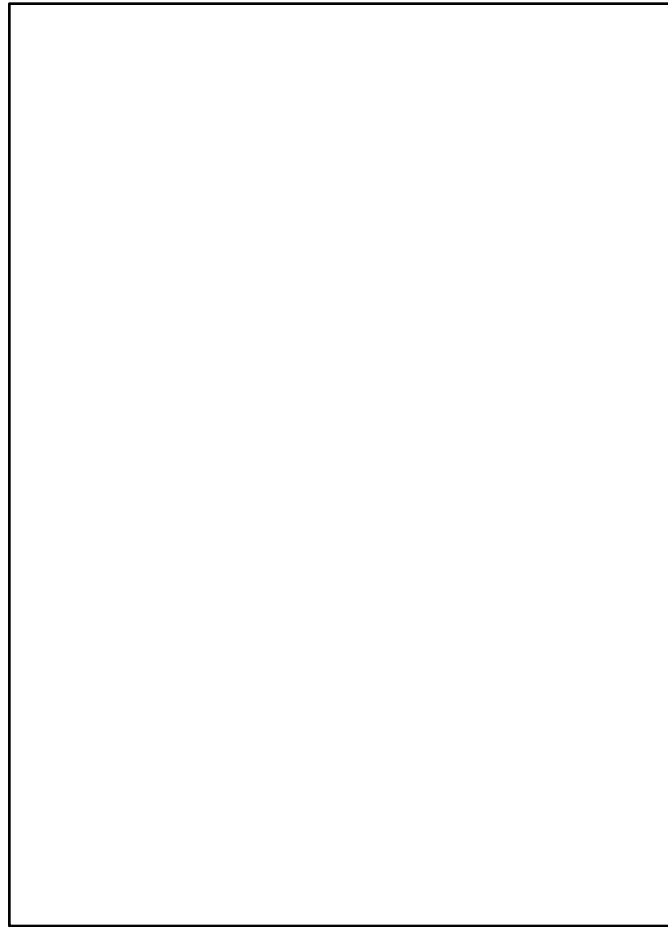
- **Question:** how do you make notes?

The writing process: making notes

- It is not enough for the words to pass through your brain.
- **Question:** How do good notes help?
- **Answer:** Good notes:
 - provide you with an excellent record of what you have read and what you thought at the time you read it.
 - help you to clarify your thoughts about what you are reading and the question you are answering. (Only through writing do we discover what we think.)
 - make it very easy to quickly survey all of your research.
 - make the transition from research to writing much smoother.
 - help you to keep your ideas separate from the ideas presented in your sources.

Make notes

Make notes – New doc



Make notes – Bibliographical info

Bibliographical information

Make notes – page number

Bibliographical information

p29

Make notes – write out quotation

Bibliographical information

p29

Make notes – write out quotation

Bibliographical information

p29 [Quotation] Blah, blah,
blah, blah, blah, blah, blah

Make notes – write your thoughts

Bibliographical information

p29 [Quotation] Blah, blah,
blah, blah, blah, blah, blah

[Your ideas] Blah, blah, blah
blah, blah, blah, blah, blah

Make notes – make a heading

Bibliographical information

Good point about blah

p29 [Quotation] Blah, blah,
blah, blah, blah, blah, blah

[Your ideas] Blah, blah, blah
blah, blah, blah, blah, blah

Make notes – use different colours

Bibliographical information

Good point about blah

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Make notes – use different colours

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Make notes – the finished doc.

Bibliographical information

Heading

quotation

notes

Heading

quotation

notes

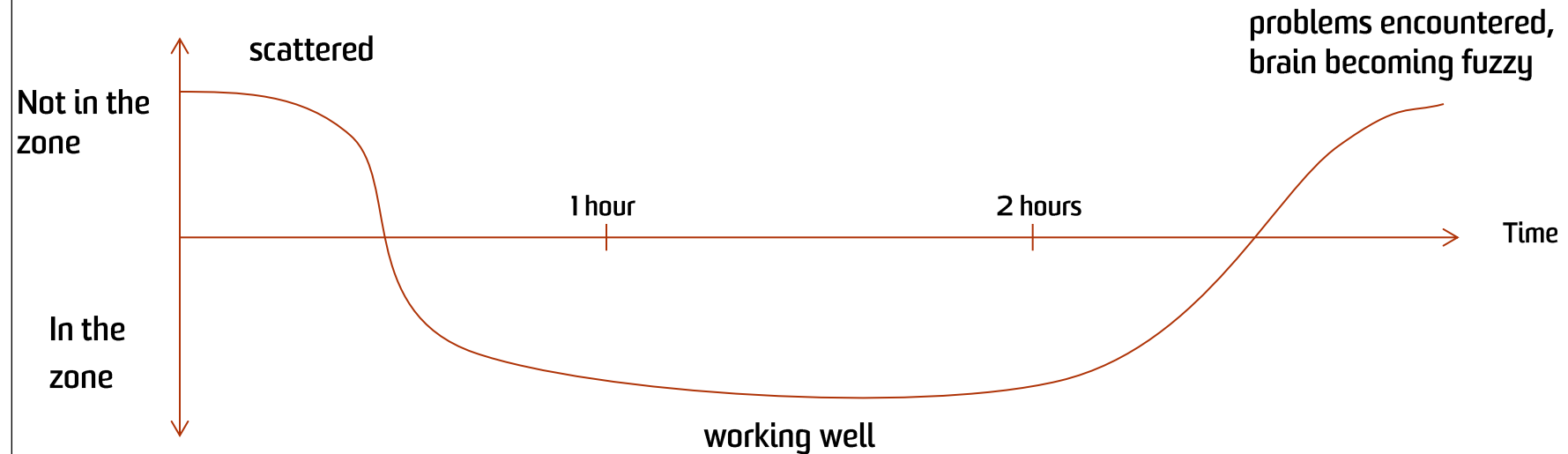
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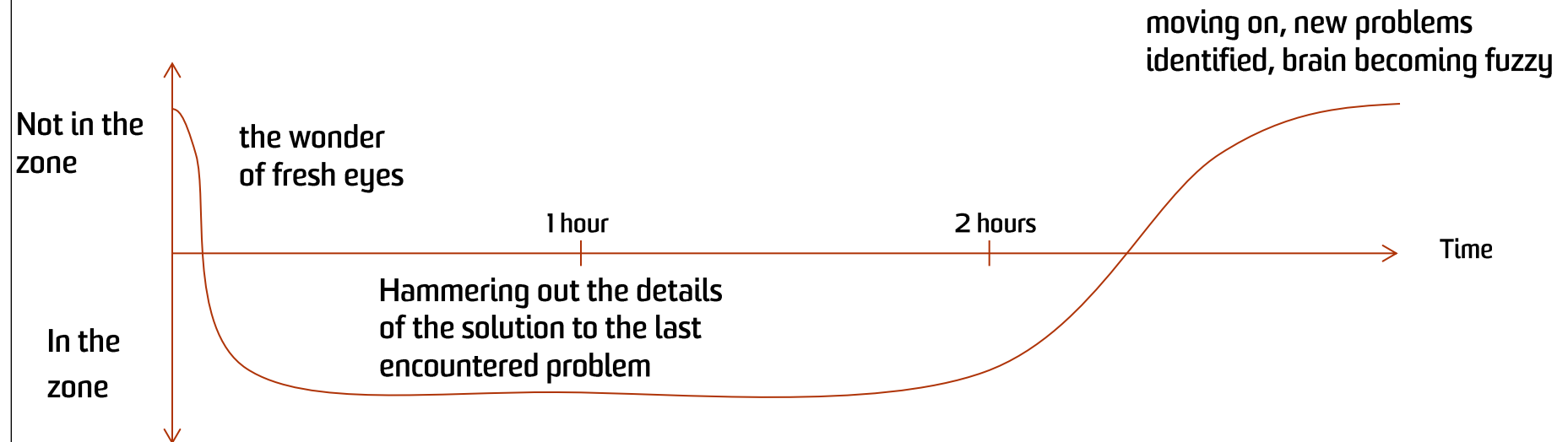
The rhythm of work

- Getting the most out of your brain
 - Intense sessions + fallow periods
 - A typical session:



The rhythm of work

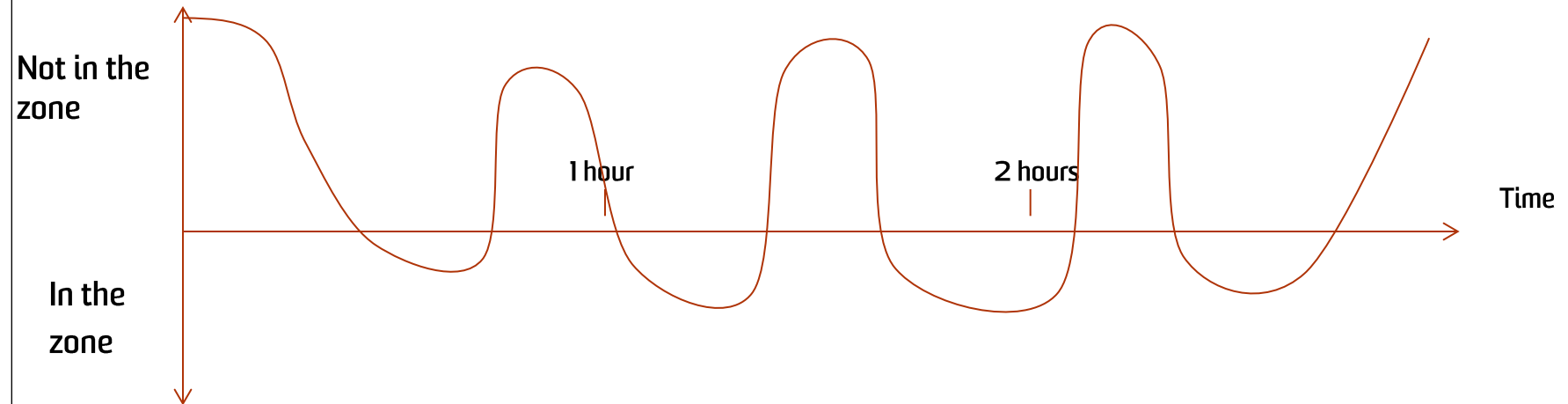
- Remember: keep coming back to achieve success
- Linking your sessions. Below = morning after the session on the previous slide:



Understanding how your brain works

Pragmatic time management

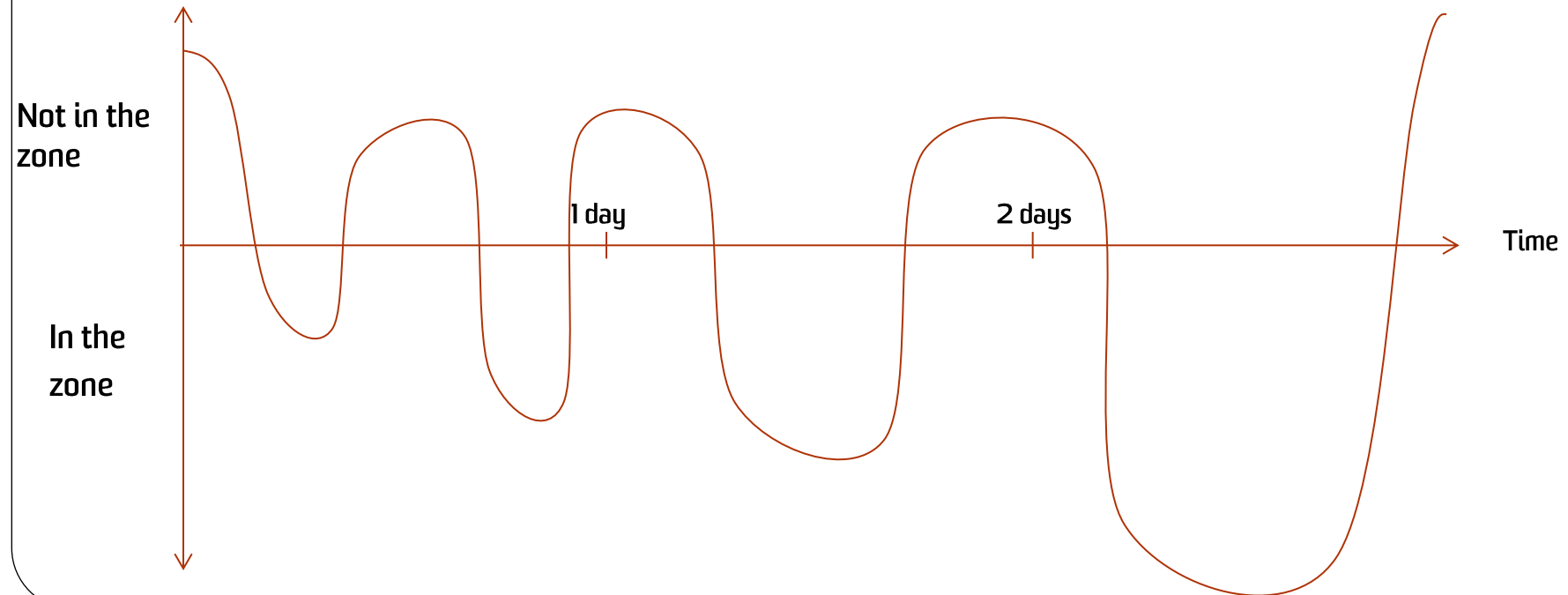
- Studying with the internet



Understanding how your brain works

Pragmatic time management

- The slow descent. Multiple sessions over several days:



Introductions

Essay structure

- **Question:** What is the basic structure of an essay?
- Introduction
- Body
- Conclusion

Important skills!

- Constructing good introductions and paragraphs lies at the heart of successful writing.

The introduction

- **Question:** Why do we have introductions?
- **Question:** What basic questions should an introduction respond to?
- **Answer:** What are you going to do? Why is it important? How are you going to do it?
- **Question:** What are the stages in an introduction?

The introduction

- Orientation
 - AKA background or context.
 - You can simply introduce the key terms/concepts from the question.
 - You can expand upon the question and present it as a problem to be tackled.
 - It can be good to say *why* the issues you are addressing are significant.
- Thesis
 - This is your general response to the question (your main argument).
 - Remember to use the language of the question
 - Elaborate if necessary
 - Begin with: “This essay argues that...” or something similar.
 - A thesis might not always be appropriate.
- Outline
 - Introduce the stages your essay will move through to establish the thesis.
 - Use language like: “First... Second... Third...” or “To begin... Following this... Finally”
 - Ensure that there is an obvious relationship between outline and thesis.

The introduction

- Optional extras
 - Scope
 - Clarify what will be left out and what will be included (flag then narrow).
- Definitions
 - Only define uncontested technical terms.
 - Don't define complex terms/concepts that need a paragraph or more.
 - Avoid dictionary definitions of contested concepts (eg, freedom, power, childhood, desire, science fiction, management).

An model introduction

Question: The bush legend and multiculturalism have provided two highly influential ways of thinking about Australian national identity. However, these powerful concepts have also hindered our understanding of the complexity of Australian society. Discuss to what extent you agree or disagree with this statement.

[1] One of the most interesting points that can be made about Australian national identity is that there are in fact a number of identities competing to be the true Australian national identity. [2] Two of the key identities in this competition are the 'bush legend' and 'multiculturalism'. [3] However, we should not think that either of these identities provides us with an accurate understanding of Australian society. [4] Indeed, this essay will argue that despite the fact that the concepts of the bush legend and multiculturalism do help us to understand key aspects of Australian society, to a considerable extent both concepts have hindered our understanding of the complexity of Australian society. [5] Speaking generally, although the concept of the bush legend helps us to understand what we might call 'traditional' Australian values, it encourages us to ignore the diversity of Australian society. [6] And while the concept of multiculturalism provides an account of some of the cosmopolitan values which underpin contemporary Australia, it can sometimes be used to gloss over problems present in Australian society. [7] This essay will explore these points, beginning with the bush legend before moving on to multiculturalism.

A model introduction

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1. Orientation 2. Orientation (note that the first sentence in the question is incorporated into the orientation) 3. Transition to thesis 4. Thesis (uses the language of the question) 5. Elaboration 6. Elaboration 7. Outline (brief because of work already done in elaboration)

Put yourselves in the marker's shoes

- Analyse the following introductions.
 - Are the basic rules followed?
 - Work out what each sentence is saying, and how each sentence is related to the other sentences.
 - Evaluate whether the introduction is successful or not and give it a mark.

Example 1 – A student introduction

Question: To what extent does the quality of a society depend upon the quality of its leader(s)?

[1] A common subject for discussion is how societies function and the role of their leaders within them. [2] A key question is whether only the leaders are responsible for the functioning of their society or if the people also have a role to play. [3] This essay argues that the qualities of a leader have a strong influence on the quality of their society. [4] First, this essay will argue that if the leader has good morals this will be reflected in their society. [5] Second, it will argue that it is better for the society when a leader is loved by the people. [6] Third, in contrast to the previous points, it will be argued that, along with the leaders, people also have a responsibility in determining the quality of their society.

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1. Orientation. On the topic, although a little vague: “how societies function” is related to the question, but a better choice of words was possible.
 2. Orientation/transition to thesis. Question paraphrased. This is reasonable.
 3. Thesis clear, question answered.
 4. First point does support thesis, but more could be said. Eg “...the effect of a leader upon their society is demonstrated by the fact that if the leader has good morals...”
 5. Second point less obviously supports the thesis: student is now dealing with what “ought” to be the case, not what “is” the case.
 6. Third point is a counter point. While it is good to have a counterpoint, the word “responsibility” again relates to what *ought* to be the case, not what *is* the case, and thus the question is not being answered.
- General assessment: This introduction is well structured and answers the question. However it could have been expressed with greater precision. Related to this, as it stands it does not exhibit a high degree of critical thinking. Mark: 6.5/10.

Example 2 – a student introduction

Question: Discuss to what extent the bush legend remains a representative image of Australian society.

[1] This essay argues that the bush legend to a minimal extent remains a representative image of Australian society. [2] The evolution of Australian society over the years has resulted in the bush legend becoming a commodity. [3] Generally the bush legend image does not represent all facets of Australian society due to changes in multiculturalism, liberation of women, homosexuality and acceptance of non-nuclear family life so in reality many Australians cannot identify with the bush legend persona. [4] However there are still some areas that the bush legend is still relevant and used, such as media, advertising and politics. [5] The bush legend as a representative image of Australia is often romanticized through media and advertising and continues to be promoted for sociopolitical reasons.

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1. A reasonable thesis. Note that there is no orientation. Generally speaking this is not a devastating problem, however you will lose marks in this course!
 2. A random sentence. Not a bad point, but out of place.
 3. A reasonable sentence, but it is not clear whether it is an elaboration upon the thesis, or part of the outline (probably the former).
 4. A reasonable sentence, but again, it is not clear whether it is an elaboration upon the thesis or part of the outline (again, probably the former).
 5. A somewhat vague sentence. It builds imprecisely upon [4]. It is not clear what is meant by “sociopolitical reasons.”
- General assessment: The content is reasonable, but the organisation needs to be improved. Mark: 6/10

Example 3 – a student introduction

Question: Explain the meaning of humanitarian intervention and analyse the arguments both for and against its practice.

- **Question:** What do you notice about this question?
- **Answer:** It does not invite a thesis, but rather a descriptive response.

[1] Humanitarian intervention remains one of the most complex and contentious issues in international relations in the twenty-first century. [2] This is because it is based upon the belief of a common humanity, an idea which is diametrically opposed to the statist manner of thinking that has dominated the international system for the past three centuries. [3] The question of which of these two conflicting principles should prevail has generated a myriad of arguments both in favour of and against the practice of humanitarian intervention.

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1. Orientation.
 2. Orientation/partial thesis?: a partial response is given to the second part of the question.
 3. Patrial thesis?: question reworded, no position evident.
- General assessment: Great orientation. No clear thesis is articulated. No outline is present. Mark 4/10.

Example 4 – a student introduction

- **Question:** Explain the meaning of humanitarian intervention and analyse the arguments both for and against its practice.

[1] The starting point of the complex history of humanitarian intervention begins in 1555 with the Treaty of Augsburg and was later cemented with the better known Peace of Westphalia in 1648, where an international norm of non-intervention based on state sovereignty was conceptualised. [2] During this turbulent period the doctrine of sovereignty was not absolute. [3] Today, although statism is the accepted international system, sovereignty remains uncertain – conflicting elements of globalisation and the dominating power of certain states compete with the purported principles of the statist system. [4] It is in this context that humanitarian intervention takes place. [5] This essay deals with the arguments both in favour of and against the practice of humanitarian intervention, concluding that while there may be bureaucratic and inefficiency problems, humanitarian intervention is necessary within the current international system as its benefits of saving lives far outweigh its detriments. [6] This essay first details the meaning of humanitarian intervention. [7] Secondly it analyses its justification within both written and customary law. [8] Thirdly, it discusses whether an obligation exists to intervene, and finally, it outlines various bureaucratic problems which undermine its effectiveness.

Example 4 – a student introduction

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1. Orientation: brief history of HI presented through a discussion of the history of sovereignty.
2. Orientation: more comments about sovereignty.
3. Orientation: more comments about sovereignty.
4. Transition from orientation to thesis: focus drawn to HI.
5. Thesis: HI is necessary. Note that the thesis is unbalanced: a benefit is mentioned, but not a detriment. Note that the thesis feels a bit like an afterthought. This is not ideal.
6. [and 7 and 8] Outline. Intelligent points. [7] and [8] could be better differentiated; there is some overlap between them. Perhaps some additional counterpoints are missing.
- General assessment: A strong introduction for an undergraduate essay. Yet: the significance of the orientation could be clearer, the thesis could be more precisely stated, and the points in the outline could be better delineated. Mark: 8/10.

- Example 5 is taken from an academic article: Okin's 1977 "Philosopher Queens and Private Wives"
- Note the absence of a question.

Example 5 - Okin

[1] Plato's ideas about women have attracted considerable attention in the last five years. [2] This is not surprising, since his proposals for the education and role of the female guardians in Book V of the *Republic* are more revolutionary than those of any other major political philosopher, not excluding John Stuart Mill. [3] However, Plato on the subject of women appears at first to present his reader with an unresolvable enigma, especially when his other dialogues are taken into account. [4] One might well ask how the same, generally consistent philosopher can assert, on the one hand, that the female sex was created from the souls of the most wicked and irrational men and can argue, on the other hand, that if young girls and boys were trained identically, their abilities as adults would be practically the same. [5] How can the claim that women are "by nature" twice as bad as men be reconciled with the radical idea that they should be included among the exalted philosophic rulers of the ideal state?

[6] While I cannot here discuss all the relevant dialogues, the following paper attempts, through analysis of Plato's arguments about private property and the family in relation to the *polis*, to explain why he appears so inconsistent about the nature and the proper role of women. [7] I contend that when one compares the arguments and proposals of the *Republic* with those of the *Laws*, it becomes clear that the absence or presence of the private family determines whether Plato advocates putting into practice his increasingly radical beliefs about the potential of women. [8] Only by examining the proposals of *Republic* V in the context of the overall aims and structure of the ideal society, and by doing likewise with the contrasting proposals regarding women in the *Laws*, will we find the differences intelligible.

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[1-2] Orientation (note indication that issues are significant)

[3] Transition from orientation to problem

[4-5] Articulation of problem

[6] Scope narrowed (all relevant dialogues will not be discussed). Aim stated succinctly (in the absence of a set question, the writer introduces a problem and articulates an aim).

[7] Thesis

[8] Outline (brief)

Relationship between the introduction and the body

- **Question:** When should the introduction be written?
- **Answer:**
 - Draft a plan (including a thesis and outline).
 - Note that a plan is similar to an introduction.
 - Revisit your plan once you have put together a reasonable draft. Revise both plan and draft. In the process convert your plan into an introduction.
 - Once your draft has been edited several times ensure that your introduction fits perfectly with it.
 - NB: Introductions are great self-checking mechanisms.
 - **Generally speaking:** Pay attention to the **dialectical relationship** in the drafting process between your introduction (plan) and the body of your essay.

Paragraphs

The body of the essay: essential points

- Content of paragraph is relevant to the question and thesis
- Topic and concluding sentences (the latter when appropriate) that are consistent with the content of the paragraph
- 1 point per paragraph
 - You may have 1 main point and a number of sub points
- No unnecessary repetition within or between paragraphs
- A logical flow within the paragraph (use transition signals)
- Good relationship and linking between paragraphs (signposting)
- Be careful when using quotations/paraphrases/summaries in topic and concluding sentences (don't lose your voice)
- A good balance between your own voice and the voices of others
- Good engagement with the ideas of others (reporting verbs and analysis)

Transition signals

- **Question:** What is a transition signal?
 - It was raining, she went to the beach.

Transition signals

- **Question:** What is a transition signal?
 - It was raining, **therefore** she went to the beach.

Transition signals

- **Question:** What is a transition signal?
 - It was raining, **however** she went to the beach.
- **Question:** How many can you think of?
 - However, on the other hand, while, although
 - Therefore, thus, hence
 - In conclusion, in sum, altogether, finally
 - First, second, third
 - To begin, next, following this, finally
 - In addition, moreover, furthermore
 - Indeed, in fact
 - For example
 - Specifically, in more detail

Identify the **transition signals**

[1] As this thesis is not concerned with the narrow perspective I could have chosen to include any number of works. [2] I therefore need to explain why the above works were selected. [3] First, I wanted to present my own position both efficiently and thoroughly and I felt that the above combination of works would best facilitate this. [4] By 'efficiently' I mean that I wanted to develop my position using as few words as possible. [5] From this point of view each discussion of each work can be thought of as being a piece in the jigsaw puzzle of my overall position. [6] By 'thoroughly' I mean that I wanted to buttress each of my points several times. [7] From this point of view each discussion of each work is not entirely distinct from every other discussion. [8] Clearly 'efficiently' and 'thoroughly' are in conflict. [9] Unfortunately, this conflict cannot be avoided or resolved because this thesis is concerned with developing a world view rather than defending a specific argument. [10] Altogether I have attempted to strike a balance between 'efficiently' and 'thoroughly': each chapter and section introduces some new ideas and at the same time reinforces the arguments that have gone before.

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Signposting

- **Remember:** Academic writing is a structured activity.
- Because of this, when writing we are always doing two things:
 1. Making points
 2. Relating points
- **Question:** What are all the instances of signposting?
 - Introductions and conclusions
 - Topic and concluding sentences
 - Transition signals
 - General linking (eg: 'a similar point was made earlier in the context of...')
 - Reporting verbs and phrases (eg: 'Hoang argues that')

Put yourselves in the marker's shoes

- Analyse the following paragraphs.
 - Are the basic rules of paragraph construction followed?
 - Work out what each sentence is saying, and how each sentence is related to the other sentences.
 - Identify transition signals.
 - Evaluate whether the paragraph is successful or not.

Example 1 – From a primary school history book.

[1] According to the reports of Captain James Cook and Sir Joseph Banks, Botany Bay offered many advantages. [2] These included a coastal area with a sheltered port, friendly natives, a pleasant climate, fertile soil, food sources including wild fruits, vegetables, birds and fish, and an environment in which the convicts could be self sufficient in a year. [3] It was also attractive due to its great distance from Britain and the fact that the convicts would have no means of escape. [4] Finally, it was a strategic stronghold in the East and it promised to be an important naval store of flax, hemp and timber.

Example 1 Function of each sentence

[1] According to the reports of Captain James Cook and Sir Joseph Banks, Botany Bay offered many advantages. [2] These included a coastal area with a sheltered port, friendly natives, a pleasant climate, fertile soil, food sources including wild fruits, vegetables, birds and fish, and an environment in which the convicts could be self sufficient in a year. [3] It was also attractive due to its great distance from Britain and the fact that the convicts would have no means of escape. [4] Finally, it was a strategic stronghold in the East and it promised to be an important naval store of flax, hemp and timber.

1. Topic sentence: Cook and Banks believed Botany Bay had many advantages.
2. Elaboration of advantages
3. Further elaboration of advantages
4. Final elaboration of advantages

General assessment: This paragraph is fine given where it was taken from.

Example 1 Transition Signals

[1] According to the reports of Captain James Cook and Sir Joseph Banks, Botany Bay offered many advantages. [2] These included a coastal area with a sheltered port, friendly natives, a pleasant climate, fertile soil, food sources including wild fruits, vegetables, birds and fish, and an environment in which the convicts could be self sufficient in a year. [3] It was also attractive due to its great distance from Britain and the fact that the convicts would have no means of escape. [4] Finally, it was a strategic stronghold in the East and it promised to be an important naval store of flax, hemp and timber.

- **Question:** Why does this paragraph not have a concluding sentence?
- **Answer:** This paragraph does not make an argument which needs to be summarised, it simply provides information.

Example 2 – from a student essay

Question: What are the characteristics of a good society?

Thesis: This essay argues that the central characteristic of a good society is being a democracy.

[1] The first key point that defines a democracy is all the people choosing their rulers. [2] It is important that everyone takes a part in this process. [3] If some groups are deprived of their right to vote, the elected governors will not be chosen by the whole population, but instead by part of it. [4] Even if part of the population is better educated or prepared than the rest, they should not determine the direction of their society. [5] Aristotle argued that “the multitude ought to be supreme rather than the few best” (2012, p. 64). [6] Furthermore, the portion of society commonly considered better educated or prepared is usually the richest portion. [7] The majority is always formed by the lower-middle class of workers, and they need democracy precisely to elect rulers that make laws to reduce the social injustices. [8] Clearly having all people choose their rulers is important for the well being of the general population and with this, for developing and maintaining a good society.

Example 2

[1] The first key point that defines a democracy is all the people choosing their rulers. [2] It is important that everyone takes a part in this process. [3] If some groups are deprived of their right to vote, the elected governors will not be chosen by the whole population, but instead by part of it. [4] Even if part of the population is better educated or prepared than the rest, they should not determine the direction of their society. [5] Aristotle argued that “the multitude ought to be supreme rather than the few best” (2012, p. 64). [6] Furthermore, the portion of society commonly considered better educated or prepared is usually the richest portion. [7] The majority is always formed by the lower-middle class of workers, and they need democracy precisely to elect rulers that make laws to reduce the social injustices. [8] Clearly having all people choose their rulers is important for the well being of the general population and with this, for developing and maintaining a good society.

1. Topic sentence (reasonable)
2. Transition to argument
3. Unnecessary padding
4. Specific argument, follows from [2]
5. Evidence, but not well integrated – note lack of engagement
6. Building on argument in [4]. “Furthermore” incorrect
7. The point of the argument that the student has been building – this is the highlight of the paragraph
8. Concluding sentence. Could be better integrated

General assessment: Some reasonable arguing. Some use of sources. Structure could be better. Mark: 7/10.

Example 2 Transition Signals

[1] The first key point that defines a democracy is all the people choosing their rulers. [2] It is important that everyone takes a part in this process. [3] If some groups are deprived of their right to vote, the elected governors will not be chosen by the whole population, but instead by part of it. [4] Even if part of the population is better educated or prepared than the rest, they should not determine the direction of their society. [5] Aristotle argued that “the multitude ought to be supreme rather than the few best” (2012, p. 64). [6] Furthermore, the portion of society commonly considered better educated or prepared is usually the richest portion. [7] The majority is always formed by the lower-middle class of workers, and they need democracy precisely to elect rulers that make laws to reduce the social injustices. [8] Clearly having all people choose their rulers is important for the well being of the general population and with this, for developing and maintaining a good society.

Improved version

- General nature of improvement: argument made earlier in paragraph and flow between aspects of argument improved (see next slide).
- [1] The first key point that defines a democracy is all the people choosing their rulers. [2] It is important that everyone takes a part in this process. * [3] Even if part of the population is **ostensibly** better educated or prepared than the rest, they should not determine the direction of their society. [4] **This is because this educated part of the population is often a wealthy minority and it is possible that they will exploit the lower and middle class workers who constitute the majority.** [5] **These workers thus need democracy precisely to elect rulers who make laws to reduce social injustices.** [6] **Aristotle supports this position when he argues that** “the multitude ought to be supreme rather than the few best” (2012, p. 64). * [7] Clearly having all people choose their rulers is important for the well being of the general population and with this, for developing and maintaining a good society.
- * Sentence removed
- [3] “ostensibly” added to prepare the reader for the argument in the following sentence
- [4] Combination of previous sentences [6] and [7] + elaboration (the idea of exploitation)
- [5] Part of previous sentence [7]
- [6] Quotation better integrated (note that quotation is still quite general in nature and thus better supporting research could be found).
- * Sentences removed

Improved version – transitions

- [1] The **first** key point that defines a democracy is all the people choosing their rulers. [2] It is important that everyone takes a part in this process. * [3] Even if part of the population is ostensibly better educated or prepared than the rest, they should not determine the direction of their society. [4] **This is because** this educated part of the population is often a wealthy minority and it is possible that they will exploit the lower and middle class workers who constitute the majority. [5] These workers **thus** need democracy precisely to elect rulers who make laws to reduce social injustices. [6] Aristotle **supports this position** when he argues that “the multitude ought to be supreme rather than the few best” (2012, p. 64). * [7] **Clearly** having all people choose their rulers is important for the well being of the general population and with this, for developing and maintaining a good society.

Example 3 – from a student essay

Question: How will Japan's political 'normalisation' affect the regional security landscape?

Student's thesis: This essay argues that the political normalisation of Japan will have a stabilising effect for East Asia.

[1] One key area of concern, however, is the deployment of the Japanese Self Defense Force (SDF) to support the United States in Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom. [2] Taking part in these highly contentious uses of force suggests that Japan may be willing to act outside of the normative and legal frameworks of the United Nations system it claims to support. [3] Bisley (2008: 80) is concerned about the regional impacts of a Japan that is willing to be involved in "risky and legally fraught endeavours" such as the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq. [4] Midford (2004: 125) counters such concerns by arguing that the new role afforded to the SDF "suggested little more than increased Japanese non-lethal logistical support for the US forces in areas well removed from combat". [5] It is thus apparent that the involvement of Japan in the US campaign against terrorism is an example of alliance-building, not re-militarisation. [6] This evidence supports the conclusion that the expansion of the Japanese military capacity continues to be informed by defensive, pacifist ideologies. [7] Thus it can be seen that Japan's political normalisation, of which the expansion of its military capacity is a part, will not destabilise the East Asian region as some critics have suggested.

Example 3

[1] One key area of concern, however, is the deployment of the Japanese Self Defense Force (SDF) to support the United States in Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom. [2] Taking part in these highly contentious uses of force suggests that Japan may be willing to act outside the normative and legal frameworks of the United Nations system it claims to support. [3] Bisley (2008: 80) is concerned about the regional impacts of a Japan that is willing to be involved in “risky and legally fraught endeavours” such as the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq. [4] Midford (2004: 125) counters such concerns by arguing that the new role afforded to the SDF “suggested little more than increased Japanese non-lethal logistical support for the US forces in areas well removed from combat”. [5] It is thus apparent that the involvement of Japan in the US campaign against terrorism is an example of alliance-building, not re-militarisation. [6] This evidence supports the conclusion that the expansion of the Japanese military capacity continues to be informed by defensive, pacifist ideologies. [7] Thus it can be seen that Japan’s political normalisation, of which the expansion of its military capacity is a part, will not destabilise the East Asian region as some critics have suggested.

1. A possible objection to the student’s argument is introduced. Note link with previous point.
2. The objection is expanded upon to indicate obliquely how it is relevant to the question/thesis.
3. Evidence is introduced to show that this concern is substantial.
4. A counter-point is introduced.
5. Significance of counterpoint explained.
6. Significance of counterpoint placed in a more general context (Japan’s continued pacifism).
7. Concluding sentence clearly relates what has been argued to the question and the thesis.

General assessment: While a bit of editing is possible, this is a strong undergraduate paragraph. 8.5/10.

Example 3 Transition signals

[1] One key area of concern, however, is the deployment of the Japanese Self Defense Force (SDF) to support the United States in Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom. [2] Taking part in these highly contentious uses of force suggests that Japan may be willing to act outside of the normative and legal frameworks of the United Nations system it claims to support. [3] Bisley (2008: 80) is concerned about the regional impacts of a Japan that is willing to be involved in “risky and legally fraught endeavours” such as the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq. [4] Midford (2004: 125) counters such concerns by arguing that the new role afforded to the SDF “suggested little more than increased Japanese non-lethal logistical support for the US forces in areas well removed from combat”. [5] It is thus apparent that the involvement of Japan in the US campaign against terrorism is an example of alliance-building, not re-militarisation. [6] This evidence supports the conclusion that the expansion of the Japanese military capacity continues to be informed by defensive, pacifist ideologies. [7] Thus it can be seen that Japan’s political normalisation, of which the expansion of its military capacity is a part, will not destabilise the East Asian region as some critics have suggested.

Example 4 – from a student essay

Question: Explain the meaning of humanitarian intervention and analyse the arguments both for and against its practice.

Thesis: No thesis articulated.

[1] Those against the practice of humanitarian intervention highlight how the concept runs counter to the international commitment to refrain from the use of force and also despite its apparent peaceful nature more than often the notion of humanitarian intervention almost always means the use of armed forces. [2] It is argued that humanitarian intervention in fact ends up doing what its proponents say they are out to prevent (Bello, 2006). [3] For example critics argue that humanitarian intervention does not promote human rights values but instead enforces them. [4] The idea of the concept should not be misunderstood as referring only to the use of force and its essence is supposedly in its response as one that utilises all prevention and protection measures available in a timely and decisive manner. [5] Those against humanitarian intervention aren't opposed to saving lives but rather concentrate on its illegitimacy and the debatable motives of intervening states, as intervention is never purely humanitarian as critics believe.

Example 4: editing

- **NB:** In lower quality essays, first of all the marker has to work out what each sentence means before they can even determine if the sentences in the paragraph form a reasonable argument.
- **[1]** Those against the practice of humanitarian intervention highlight how the concept runs counter to the international commitment to refrain from the use of force and also despite its apparent peaceful nature more than often the notion of humanitarian intervention almost always means the use of armed forces.

Example 4: editing

- **NB:** In lower quality essays, first of all the marker has to work out what each sentence means before they can even determine if the sentences in the paragraph form a reasonable argument.
- **[1]** Those against the practice of humanitarian intervention highlight how the concept runs counter to the international commitment to refrain from the use of force and **also despite** its apparent peaceful nature **more than often the notion** of humanitarian intervention almost always means the use of armed forces.
 - “also despite” = bad parallelism.
 - “more than often” not needed when “almost always” is present in the sentence.
 - “the notion” seems redundant.
- **[1]** Those against the practice of humanitarian intervention highlight how the concept runs counter to the international commitment to refrain from the use of force and also **argue that** despite its apparent peaceful nature * humanitarian intervention almost always means the use of armed forces.

Example 4 editing

- [2] It is argued that humanitarian intervention in fact ends up doing what its proponents say they are out to prevent (Bello, 2006).

Example 4 editing

- [2] It is argued that humanitarian intervention in fact ends up doing what its proponents say they are out to prevent (Bello, 2006).
 - “are out” is informal.
- [2] It is argued that humanitarian intervention in fact ends up doing what its proponents say they wish to prevent (Bello, 2006).

Example 4 editing

- Sentence [3] is reasonable, although “for example” could be replaced by “specifically.”
- [4] The idea of the concept should not be misunderstood as referring only to the use of force and its essence is supposedly in its response as one that utilises all prevention and protection measures available in a timely and decisive manner.

Example 4 editing

- Sentence [3] is reasonable, although “for example” could be replaced by “specifically.”
- [4] The idea of the concept should not be misunderstood as referring only to the use of force and its essence is supposedly in its response as one that utilises all prevention and protection measures available in a timely and decisive manner.
 - “The idea of the” is too wordy. Remove.
 - “and” = confusing transition. Use a better transition signal.
 - “is supposedly in its response as one that utilises” is clumsy.
 - A transition signal at the start of the sentence would be useful.
- [4] However, the concept should not be misunderstood as referring only to the use of force, as its essence supposedly lies in the fact that when interventions occur, they utilise all prevention and protection measures available in a timely and decisive manner.
 - NB: the last part of the sentence sounds plagiarised.

Example 4 editing

- Sentence [5] is reasonable.

Example 4 edited version

[1] Those against the practice of humanitarian intervention highlight how the concept runs counter to the international commitment to refrain from the use of force and also argue that despite its apparent peaceful nature humanitarian intervention almost always means the use of armed forces. [2] It is argued that humanitarian intervention in fact ends up doing what its proponents say they wish to prevent (Bello, 2006). [3] Specifically critics argue that humanitarian intervention does not promote human rights values but instead enforces them. [4] However, the concept should not be misunderstood as referring only to the use of force, as its essence supposedly lies in the fact that when interventions occur, they utilise all prevention and protection measures available in a timely and decisive manner. [5] Those against humanitarian intervention aren't opposed to saving lives but rather concentrate on its illegitimacy and the debatable motives of intervening states, as intervention is never purely humanitarian as critics believe.

Example 4 edited version **Function of each sentence**

[1] Those against the practice of humanitarian intervention highlight how the concept runs counter to the international commitment to refrain from the use of force and also argue that despite its apparent peaceful nature humanitarian intervention almost always means the use of armed forces. [2] It is argued that humanitarian intervention in fact ends up doing what its proponents say they wish to prevent (Bello, 2006). [3] Specifically critics argue that humanitarian intervention does not promote human rights values but instead enforces them. [4] However, the concept should not be misunderstood as referring only to the use of force, as its essence supposedly lies in the fact that when interventions occur, they utilise all prevention and protection measures available in a timely and decisive manner. [5] Those against humanitarian intervention aren't opposed to saving lives but rather concentrate on its illegitimacy and the debatable motives of intervening states, as intervention is never purely humanitarian as critics believe.

1. Two reasons are introduced why humanitarian intervention is problematic: a) it runs counter to international law, b) it is not as peaceful as it sounds. As a marker, I now expect that these points will be expanded upon. Point a) sounds plagiarised.
2. This sentence expands upon point b). I would expect a) to be expanded upon first.
3. Further expansion of b). The student's argument is only implied: specifically, the student is implying that 'enforcing' human rights values is a bad thing. This is not a given.
4. Counter argument to b): care is taken in humanitarian intervention to minimise the negative impact. Most of the sentence is plagiarised.
5. Concluding sentence. Point a) from the topic sentence is reaffirmed (although no arguments have been presented to support it). Point c) introduced: intervening states can have dubious motives.

General assessment: This paragraph is poor because it covers three separate points and does so in a haphazard manner (there is some logic in the middle sentences). There should be one paragraph for each of the three points. There is also a fair amount of plagiarism. Mark: 4/10 (because of the plagiarism it's hard to know what mark to give)

Transition signals

[1] Those against the practice of humanitarian intervention highlight how the concept runs counter to the international commitment to refrain from the use of force and **also** argue that despite its apparent peaceful nature humanitarian intervention almost always means the use of armed forces.

[2] It is argued that humanitarian intervention **in fact** ends up doing what its proponents say they wish to prevent (Bello, 2006). [3] **Specifically** critics argue that humanitarian intervention does not promote human rights values but instead enforces them. [4] The concept should not be misunderstood as referring only to the use of force, **as** its essence supposedly lies in the fact that when interventions occur, they utilise all prevention and protection measures available in a timely and decisive manner. [5] Those against humanitarian intervention aren't opposed to saving lives **but rather** concentrate on its illegitimacy and the debatable motives of intervening states, as intervention is never purely humanitarian as critics believe.

The conclusion

The conclusion

Question: How are conclusions different to introductions?

- Restate question/problem
- Summarise main points
- Restate thesis
- No new information

Integrating the ideas of others

Integrating research: Why do we draw on others' ideas

1. To show that we have read widely in a particular field.
2. To establish our ideas within an intellectual community; that is, to have a discussion.
3. To strengthen our position with supporting evidence/arguments.
4. To strengthen our position by giving us something to argue against.
5. To give us something to write about.
6. To help us demonstrate critical thinking.

Critical thinking

What is critical thinking in an academic context?

- **Question:** What are some of the aspects of critical thinking in an academic context?
- **Answer:**
 - Being knowledgeable
 - Showing understanding (think complexity)
 - Being sceptical
 - Identifying patterns
 - Using reasoning and evidence
 - Being systematic
 - Being efficient
 - Being consistent
 - Being flexible
 - Being independent (keep your voice strong)
 - Being principled

Critical thinking: nuance, evidence, qualification

- Consider the claim, “Australia is the best country in the world.” Your job is to add to this statement to make it more critical.
- Start by mapping your ideas on a continuum.
- NB: *Not* “Australia is a good country.”

“Australia is the best country in the world”

Health care

Human development index

Influence in global culture

CO2
emissions
per capita

Stable
democracy

Global power

Public
transport (UMI)

No



Rule of law

Centrist
tendencies

Beautiful
environment

Life expectancy
gap between
mainstream and
indigenous
populations

GDP per
capita

Income disparity

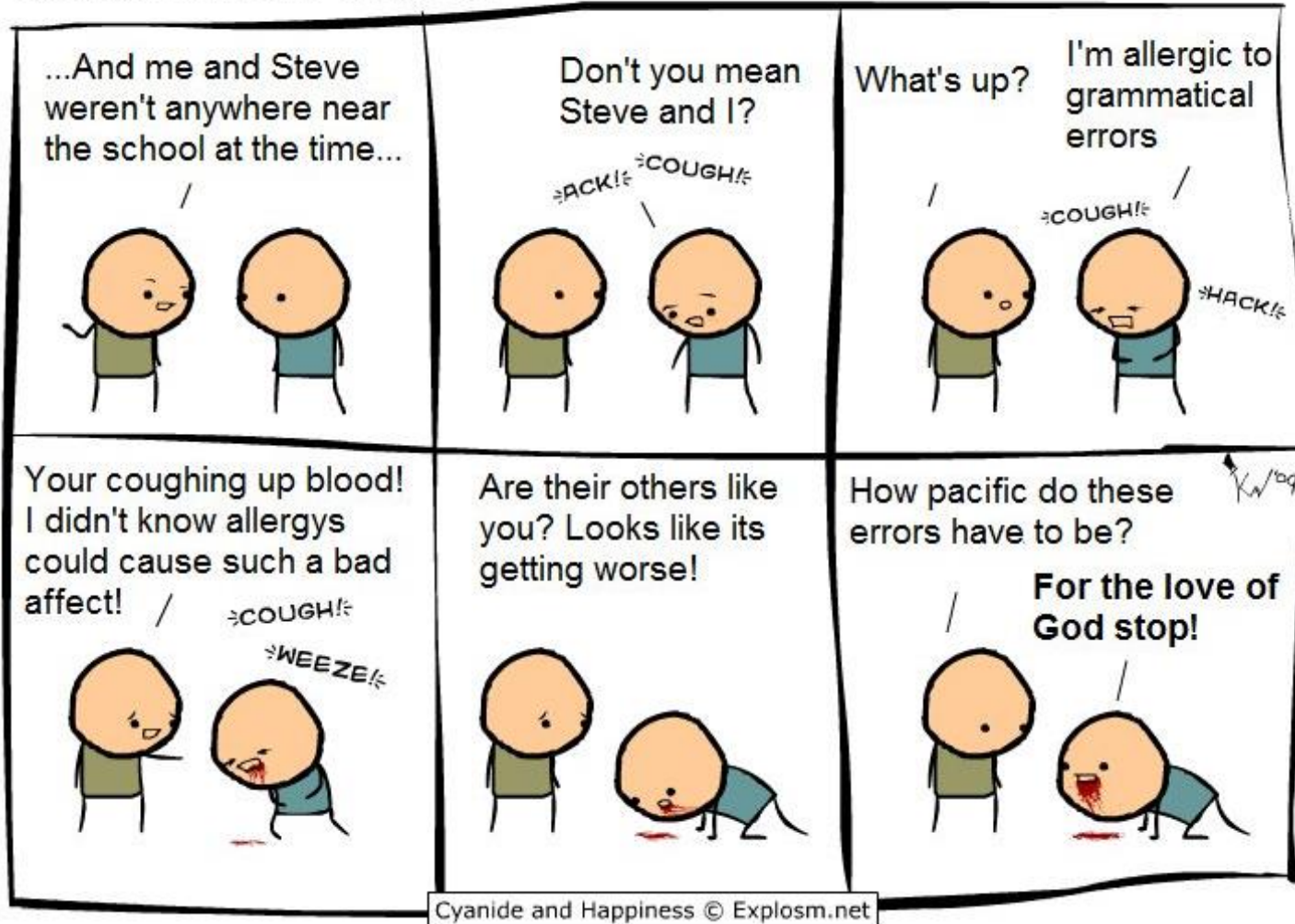
Popular
place for
immigration

Sporting prowess

For whom the
bell tolls index

Grammar and academic expression

COMIC REWRITE CONTEST



Academic expression

- **Question:** What do we mean when we say that academic writing is formal?
- **Answer:** We mean that it is clear, accurate, efficient, and for the most part emotionally neutral.
- **Full word forms**
 - **Do not write:** It's, don't, shouldn't, quote, ad, e.g., i.e., etc.
 - **Write:** It is, do not, should not, quotation, advertisement, for example, that is, etcetera.
- **Tentative language**
 - **Write:** It could be argued that, perhaps, these findings suggest that, to some extent, it would seem that, somewhat

Academic expression

- **Clichés**
 - **Do not write:** Going forward, at the end of the day, strategic plan
- **Sensational / melodramatic / journalistic language**
 - **Do not write:** It was absolutely shocking that Berlusconi, who is a terrible crook and a disgusting womaniser, is yet again running for election.
 - **Write:** It is surprising that Berlusconi, whose political career and private life have been very controversial, is yet again running for election.

Academic expression

- **Colloquial language**

- **Do not write:** All in all, the government's been pretty hopeless when it comes to sorting out the pokies.
- **Write:** In sum, the government's regulation of the poker-machine industry has been inadequate.

- **Rhetorical questions**

- **Do not write:** We have to ask ourselves: do we really care about people from other countries?
- **Write:** It could be argued that people from one state do not care about people from other states.

What not to do when you write

Avoid tautologies (and redundancies)

- **Question:** What is a tautology?
 - NB: Both weak and strong suffer from tautologies
- **Question:** What do you think about the following?

Entry level tautologies

- An accepted social norm
- The next step moving forward
- Everyone noticed that education is not the same as before and it has changed a lot.

What not to do when you write

Mid-level tautologies

- **Question:** How many tautologies can you spot?
- **Question:** Are there any other problems?
- Children were encouraged to explore, play, be independent and discover things for themselves.

What not to do when you write

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What not to do when you write

Mid-level tautologies

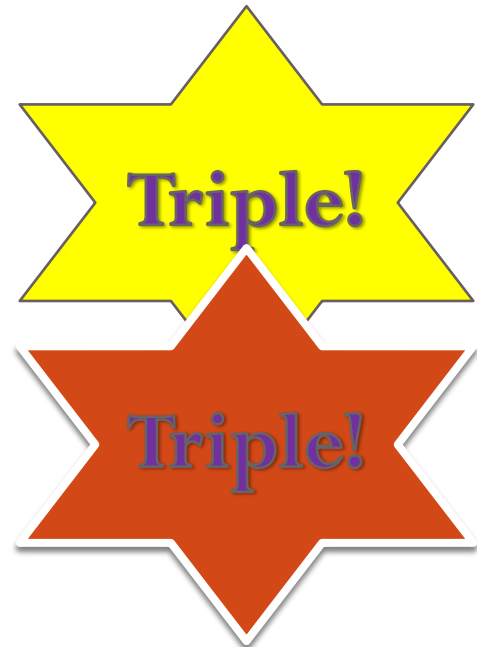
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What not to do when you write

Mid-level tautologies

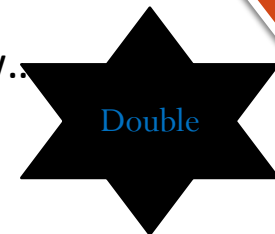
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- These new and revolutionary findings and observations of how...



What not to do when you write

Mid-level tautologies

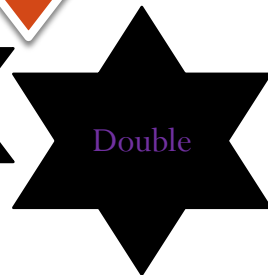
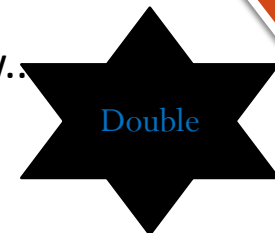
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Mid-level tautologies

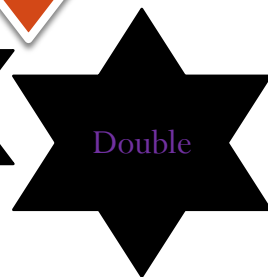
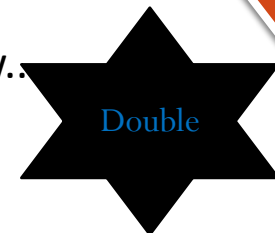
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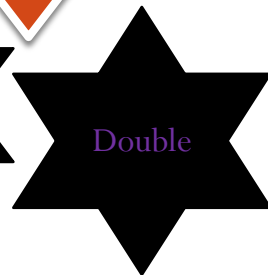
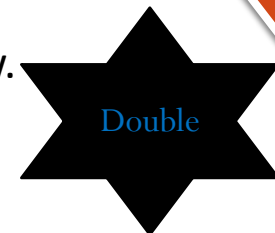
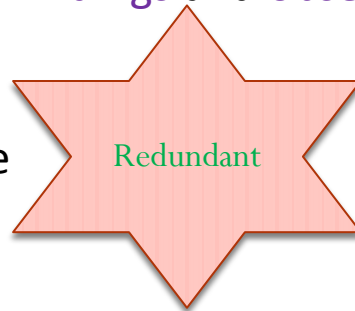
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Mid-level tautologies

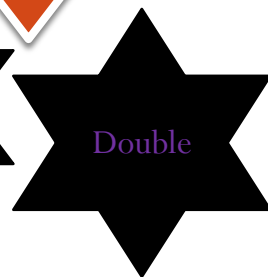
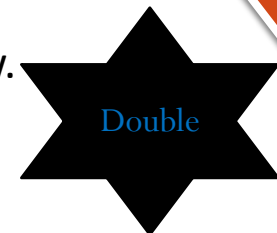
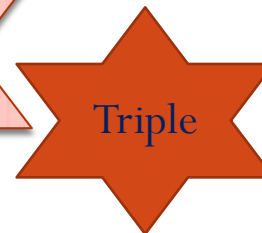
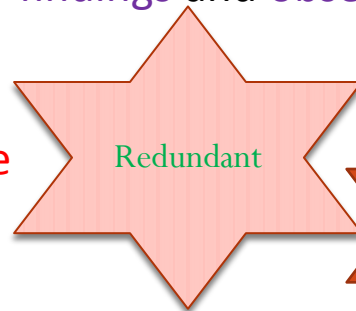
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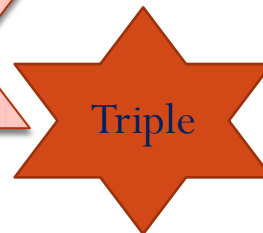
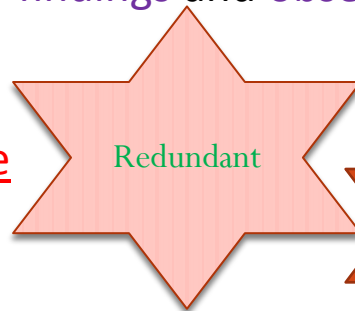
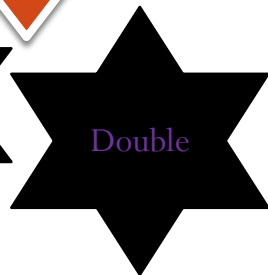
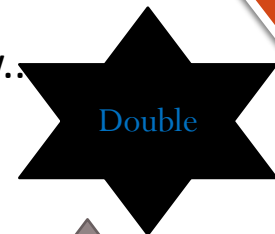
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What not to do when you write

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- **Right now** in **this day and age**



What not to do when you write

High level tautologies (prize winner for 2013)

- These scribbles are a personal esoteric symbolism, unintelligible to others because they are a form of shorthand hieroglyphic, which produces spontaneous, fluid and abstract solutions, decipherable only to their creator.



Nonariffic!

What not to do when you write

High level tautologies (prize winner

for 2

1

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Nonariffic!

What not to do when you write

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Nonariffic!

Visit the learning centre

- The lower ground floor of the Chancellery building
- For students of all academic abilities
 - Online resources
 - Workshops
 - Individual consultations
 - Conversation classes
 - General education subjects