

### Introduction

There are countless ways to stylistically complete an academic essay. Here are some examples of how students have successfully done so, while maintaining proper academic structure.

Source: <http://www.law.uwa.edu.au/students/Wellbeing/survival-guide/essay-examples>

### A proper introduction should:

- Introduce main arguments
  - Have an attention grabbing first sentence
  - Provide concise information about broader significance of topic
  - Lead in to the body of the essay
- Here are three examples of introduction paragraphs. They have been re-written several times to illustrate the difference between excellent, good and poor answers. For a close reading of the examples, click the images below.

### The Body

- The body of your essay should:
- Address one idea per paragraph
  - Support arguments with scholarly references or evidence
  - Contextualise any case studies or examples
- Style
- Use correct punctuation and proofread your work
  - Keep writing impersonal (do not use 'I', 'we', 'me')
  - Be concise and simple
  - Be confident ("The evidence suggests..." rather than "this could be because...")
  - Connect paragraphs so they flow and are logical
  - Introduce primary and secondary sources appropriately
  - Avoid using too many quotations or using quotes that are too long
  - Do not use contractions (you're, they'd)
  - Do not use emotive language ("the horrific and extremely sad scene is evidence of...")

### Conclusion

- A proper conclusion should:
- Sum up arguments
  - Provide relevance to overall topic and unit themes
  - Not introduce new ideas

### Example - Defining Topic

### Example - Introducing Sources

The opening statements clearly identify two arguments presented by the primary source. This leaves the rest of the paragraph to investigate and refute these claims.

There are a variety of causes for gun violence mentioned in the article. The first and most prominent of these explanations is the increased "flow of weapons to thugs and drug dealers" (Ansley, 2012) that was alleged to have occurred within Sydney. The article further clarifies that "criminal arsenals" (Ansley 2012) have increased due to firearm thefts. Increases in the supply of "criminal arsenals" (Ansley 2012) can emanate from either domestic or international sources. Various academic studies have shown that international firearm trafficking is not a serious issue within Australia with negligible levels of firearm smuggling into the country (Moxos, 2000). Thus, this report will exclude international sources as a factor in any increase in gun violence in Western Sydney. The article suggests that the primary reason for increasing criminal stockpiles is due to domestic firearm thefts (Ansley, 2012). The latest research from the Australian Institute of Criminology shows that there has been a small rise in the incidence of firearm thefts over the past five years (Bricknell, 2011). These statistics have to be analysed in the context of a significant long-term downward trend in firearm thefts since the adoption of the NFA (Baker & McPhedan, 2007). Because this report found that only three percent of stolen firearms were used in future crimes (Bricknell, 2011) and there were only 620 incidents involving gun theft in 2008-09 across Australia, this report finds it unlikely increased firearm theft has contributed to any increase in the level of firearm offences in Western Sydney.

This argument shows strong engagement with both the primary and secondary sources.

The author begins by acknowledging the opposing arguments and refutes these claims. This keeps the argument strong and focused.

This is an example of an excellent summative sentence. If you are having trouble avoiding the use of personal terms such as 'I' or 'we' an alternative is to use phrases like "this report" or "for the purpose of this essay," as demonstrated here.

The paragraphs demonstrate how to engage with a variety of scholarly material including primary sources, scholarly theories and formal statistics

### Example - Opposing Arguments

Catching introductory sentence.

At first glance, the definition of bushfires or arson may seem deceptively simple. For the purposes of this Essay, the standard definition for bushfires used by the Australian Fire Services will be adopted. This definition states "bushfires that burn in outdoor areas of grassland, scrubland or forest" (CSIRO 2004) This limits the scope of this essay as the above definition does not include the conventional urban structural fires that dominate arson studies outside Australia (Wills 2004). Given that bushfire, as opposed to wildfire, is a predominantly Australian term (Wills 2004), this essay will be limited to instances of bushfire arson in Australia.

The author acknowledges the limitations of the essay in order to keep writing succinct and focused.

This paragraph defines the topic to be addressed, establishing a direction for the essay and providing additional context to material addressed.

**Example Two**

*This is an excerpt from a short report which required students to think critically about the media coverage of a crime and how this compares and contrasts with criminological statistics and academic articles on the topic.*

Clear statement of argument.

The television segments' repeat mention of the nationality of offenders suggests there is a cultural explanation as to why crime is occurring in Australia. The apparent "new wave of crime" is due to the streets being "awash with Bulgarian and Romanian snatch and run pick pockets." One source of authority in the segment is Mike

Julian, the national security manager for Westfield's in Australia. His first comment regarding the thieves is, "They were pick pocketing in London and they realised, 'Well, let's go to Australia. There's money there.'" This, along with clips of pick pocketing Romanians in Spain, constructs offenders' race as criminal regardless of the environment or circumstance. Julian smiles after talking about the deportation of these "ethnic gangs" after imprisonment. This suggests that in his mind, the solution to this problem is removing these immigrants from Australia, as their criminality is apparently intrinsic to their nationality.

Many criminologists do not share the media's reasoning behind crime, in this account. Attention to ethnicity can lead to prejudicial stereotyping, resulting in unfair treatment by authority, and potentially more law breaking. The environment of an individual has been shown to have a greater correlation to criminality in the past than race alone.

The Financial Times World Desk Reference's rough indication of thefts does not favour the assumption that treating it as a culturally fuelled action. While Romania is recorded as having 1,028 thefts per 100,000 people, Australia has a much larger figure of 6,635 thefts per 100,000 people. Bealer and Glemney use findings from the International Crime Victims Survey to conclude that Australia had the highest risk of personal theft, with 6.5%, out of seventeen industrialised countries. When considering pick pocketing specifically, Bulgaria had 3.5% of survey respondents victimised compared to Australia's 1.2% in 2001. However, Bulgaria still did not have the highest rate of pick pocketing and rates decreased to 1.9% in 2003. It was suggested that this drop corresponds with major crime groups moving to other parts of Europe. The media has applied this theory to Australia. Theft and pick pocketing is not considerably more prominent in Romania or Bulgaria than in Australia, so there is little reason to think criminal activity is inherent to these races.

The author concludes by briefly summarising the statistical evidence and relating it back to the argument.

*Annotations:*

- Clear presentation of argument.
- Appropriate contextualisation of primary source.
- Illustrates critical thinking and creative engagement with the primary source.
- Good use of theoretical evidence. Note the proper use of footnote referencing style.
- Excellent combination of statistical and theoretical evidence.

This example illustrates how to keep an essay succinct and focused, by taking the time to define the topic:

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