**IB Extended Essay: Lesson #12—Writing the Introduction**

This lesson will explore the role of the introduction of your Extended Essay and give you some advice on how to go about writing it.

Below is what the IB has to say about the introduction.

*The introduction should tell the reader what to expect in the essay. The introduction should make clear to the reader the focus of the essay, the scope of the research, in particular an indication of the sources to be used, and an insight into the line of argument to be taken.*

Planning the introduction

Writing a draft introduction is difficult, but bear in mind that you can always return to it if necessary and refine it. In fact it is probably the last part of the essay that you will finalise as you will want to ensure it accurately reflects what you have written. However it is very useful to have a draft version as it just helps you to make a start.

**The purpose of the introduction**

The introduction should be seen as the ground-work for the rest of the essay. It needs to happen before you launch into any complex arguments. The introduction for any essay gets the reader's attention, and clearly establishes and explains the question.

**What to cover in the introduction?**

There is no need to be too ambitious. You are simply leading the reader into the topic. You could start by briefly explaining the nature of your research question and how you intend to tackle it. You may also define any terms that may be ambiguous.

You may want to indicate the academic context for your essay and then build on it more in the next paragraph/section of the essay. Setting it in its academic context does not mean you need to engage in a long academic debate and the necessity of this is dependent on the title and subject area of your extended essay. Some more information on this is given below but if you are unsure then ask your supervisor.

## More about 'Academic context'

By placing the essay in its academic context in the introduction you show how it relates to existing subject knowledge and why it is worthy of investigation. This will probably involve introducing the reader to relevant subject theories, ideas, principles and studies.

Academic context may well be applied differently, depending on what your essay is about and which subject it is presented in. If your essay addresses a question related to an academic debate then you would need to give a brief overview of that debate. A more general approach would be to show briefly how your question relates to research in the field. For instance if you are working with an experimental subject you might want to refer to experiments already carried out in the topic area chosen. If you are writing a literary essay then it might be that you will give the academic context by stating that your author is part of the Romantic Movement in poetry and briefly define the Movement’s features.

Alternatively if you were writing a philosophy essay you might want to show how the essay fits into a subject tradition or conception. Often you will be using subject theories or concepts that are essential for an exploration of the research question. These theories would need to be defined in the introduction. This could apply in several subjects for instance film, economics, geography, social anthropology and psychology.

# **Example**

Below is an example introduction from a student essay. Take a look to see if you think it delivers the requirements for an Extended Essay introduction. Hover over the underlined sections to see some advice.

## History essay example

***To what extent were anti-Semitic policies a planned and consistent feature of the Nazi Party Programme between 1920 and 1939?***

There is ample evidence that anti-Semitic ideas and policies dominated the Nazi Party Programme between 1920 and 1939. Anti-Jewish ideas were introduced by the National Socialists with the promulgation of the Party Programme in 1920 and manifested through boycotts, terror and the gradual removal of civil rights throughout the Hitler epoch, culminating in the Final Solution which saw the extermination of an estimated six million Jews.

This essay will explore the extent to which anti-Semitic policies were a planned and consistent feature of the Nazi Party Programme between 1920 and 1939. It will focus on the pre-war period and examine the evidence as to whether policies against the Jews were part of a long term strategy or plan. Thirty years ago a debate arose between historians about whether or not Hitler had a master plan for the extermination of the Jews. The terms Intentionalists and Functionalists (or Structuralists) were adopted by Timothy Mason (1981) to characterise the opposing sides in the historiographical debate. The Intentionalist view expounded by historians such asDawidowicz (1975) argued that anti-Semitic policies and particularly the Holocaust were pre-conceived. The contrasting Functionalist position expounded by historians such as Broszat (1981), that Hitler had a basic framework of ideas but no definite goal (other than ridding Germany of the Jews) challenged the view of the inevitability of the Holocaust.

These interpretations have more recently given way to a third position which could be seen as a synthesis of the two views. Historians such as Ian Kershaw (1999) have suggested that policies were introduced as a result of pressures from above and below and that although Hitler may not have been aware of all the initiatives, they fitted in with his general ideology. If the end is marked with inconsistency then a similar scenario could be attributed to the means. In other words the period 1920 to 1939 may not provide a consistent blueprint for Nazi anti-Semitism or be seen as a preparation for the Final Solution. As Crew asserts Nazi policies were "complex and contradictory" (Crew, 1994, p.276).

This essay will discuss anti-Semitic ideas and policies of the Nazis between 1920 to 1939 and analyse the planning and participation of different departments and individuals within the Nazi State. It will explore major ideas and developments in this period in relation to the Jews including the following: Nazi party ideology; Mein Kampf; The role of the SA; the Nuremberg Laws 1935; propaganda and education; The Olympic Games 1936; Kristallnacht 1938.

# **TASK: Reflection: My Introduction**

You should now produce a draft of your introduction. This should be kept within your Researcher’s Reflection Space and shared here with your supervisor when you agree it is relevant to do so.

(Note: This assignment is not graded - it will just be reviewed by your supervisor.)