

# Introductions and Conclusions for Essays

## Introductions

Introductions are the overview of the textual journey that you and your readers are about to embark on. The introduction is therefore an important part of your writing as it grabs your readers' attention, but can also tell them how well your thoughts are put together, how well-organized your piece is and how well you write. There is no fool-proof recipe for writing introductions. However, it must answer the following questions:

*What am I going to discuss? Why is it important? How am I going to approach this discussion?*

### Introductions should:

- Orient your readers to your topic
- Set the context of your piece
- Raise the question you intend to answer in your piece
- State briefly the main points to be covered in your argument
- State your approach or position on the topic

### Example:

**Task:** Reflecting on your future as a health care professional, discuss the value of being an integrated health professional (IHP) who is knowledgeable, empathic and reflective, while also practicing the ABC and D of dignity conserving care.

**Introduction:** Health professionals have different views of what it means to be a health professional and what skills they should have. Some believe that all that is needed to practice efficiently is specialised knowledge and technical skills. However, for health professionals to be competent, they need several different kinds of skills, not only technical expertise. They therefore need to be integrated health professionals (IHPs) that practice dignity conserving care. In this task, I will begin by describing two frameworks – the IHP framework and the ABC and D of dignity conserving care. I will use these frameworks to discuss why it is important for health professionals to be integrated health professionals and reflect on my thoughts and feelings as a developing IHP.



## Conclusions

Conclusions are often the most difficult part of a paper to write but they are important as they signify the end of a textual journey. The conclusion gives your reader something to take away with them and should indicate why the paper was meaningful and useful. It is also your final opportunity to make a good impression.

### Conclusions should:

- Give the essay a sense of completeness
- Leave a final impression on the reader
- Answer the question “So what?” (Use this as a starting point if you are stuck)
- Bring the reader full circle. Refer back to the purpose/s of your piece to provide unity
- Synthesise your main points

### Avoid:

- Merely summarizing your essay. You must critically engage with the message you are driving
- Introducing new ideas or including evidence that should be in the body of the paper

### Example:

**Task:** (as above)

**Conclusion:** In conclusion, as can be seen from this discussion, if health professionals truly desire to be competent, efficient professionals, they need to be knowledgeable, empathic and reflective. They also need to practice dignity conserving care. The characteristics of an IHP and dignity conserving care are important as they affect how patients respond to health professionals. They also affect what patients think and feel about themselves. The IHP and ABCD frameworks are useful tools for developing health professionals to use, both now and when they eventually practice.

### Adapted from:

1. Anonymous, 2015. Becoming a health professional student assessment pack. Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Cape Town, South Africa.
2. UCT Upper Campus Writing Centre, 2015

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