CAMBRIDGE
International Education

Worksheet: How to write an effective introduction

What do you think are the most important features that an introduction to a discursive essay should have?

Pick three from the list below

1. Include lots of examples
2. Focuses on the words of the question
3. Grabs the interest of the reader
4. Are 200 words long
5. Gives your point of view on the topic
6. Tells you everything in detail that will be in the essay.

When writing a discursive essay, it is important to write an effective introduction that

- Is focused on the wording of the question
- Outlines your point of view on the issue
- Defines the key terms of the question
- Grabs the interest of the reader.

Avoid introductions that

- Are too long
- Are vague and too generalised
- Gives all the information that will then be repeated later in the essay
- Gives a list of examples – save these for later in the essay.

Consider the following question

'Artificial Intelligence should be welcomed not feared. To what extent do you agree with this statement?'

The first thing you should do before you write an answer is to plan what you want to say.

For instance, you might have some ideas on the benefits of AI such as:

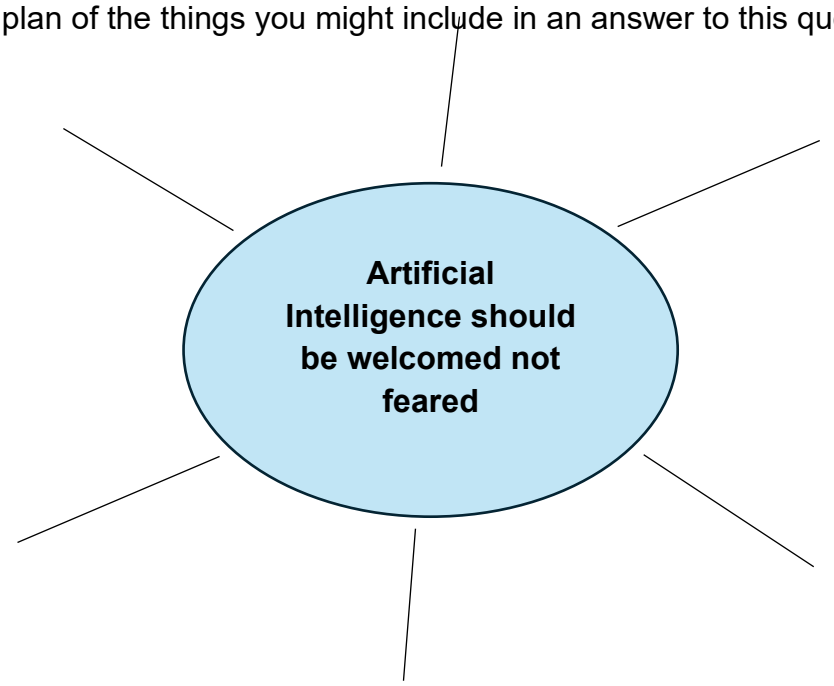
- helps with dangerous jobs
- saves time
- helps people access information quickly.

Some negatives might be:

- it takes people's jobs
- could develop a mind of its own
- it makes us lazy.

Can you think of any other ideas?

Brainstorm a plan of the things you might include in an answer to this question.



Once you have your plan you can begin deciding the structure of your essay and how you will begin.

What is your main view on the topic?

The best way to open an essay is to offer some overall comments on both sides of the argument.

Below are two examples – one agreeing that Artificial Intelligence should be welcomed not feared and the other disagreeing with it.

1. Artificial intelligence should be welcomed and not feared. It has helped make peoples lives much easier, enabled companies to save money and enhanced the things we do in our everyday lives.
2. I don't think AI should be welcomed because it has taken many people's jobs. It could also take over the world and destroy us all. It leaves us lazy and could make our lives boring.

Write your own introduction of no more than 50 words which covers both sides of the argument. You do not need to give your final point of view until the conclusion of the essay.