Introductions

So, let's talk about introductions. Your essay introduction is a key that allows your reader to understand what your argument is going to be to the best of your ability, and so for that you need to provide us with a certain amount of information. But what exactly do you need to put in? Well, I'm going to put it down to just four things that any good introduction is probably going to cover.

So, number one: What is your question? What does it mean? What kind of keywords or key concepts are you trying to explore in this essay?

Number two: What is your argument? In relation to that, do you agree with the question? Do you disagree? Do you have something that complicates the idea that the question proposes? Please let us know exactly where your stance is so that we can understand how you’re going to show us that across the course of the essay.

Number three: What are you looking at? Are these certain texts? Are these certain studies? Are these certain ideas? What are you drawing our attention to in this essay that we’re going to then learn about?

And number four: What are you going to be talking about across your essay? What are your paragraphs going to be showing us, one after the other? How is your argument going to develop?

If you can get those four things down into an essay introduction you’re probably going to be all set for your paragraphs to do all the hard work and so once you’ve got those four things in your mind, just think about ‘can I make them efficiently and with clarity?’

Go back and look through your introduction: Have you hit all four of those things? Have you done them swiftly enough or in enough detail for it to be clear? And if you’ve done that, we’ll be all set to read on and find out what you have to say.

I’m Jamie from the Oxford Study Skills Centre and I’ll see you next time.