

Dissertation Introduction Template

This guide seeks to explain in simple terms the structure and purpose of dissertations introductions. This document is a generic, non-subject specific series of explanations; readers should bear in mind that there are subtle differences in each subject discipline. Your tutor is the subject specific expert in academic writing to whom ultimately you should defer. Across most subject disciplines however, introductions, conclusions and literature reviews follow a similar structure and purpose. To use the guide appropriately you will need to consider how you apply this guidance to your topic or subject discipline.

Introductions should have the following:

- **What:** Your focus, explain the specific question or topic you are examining. Clearly state what your principal argument will be in this dissertation.
- **Why:** Your rationale, how is your work original. (Note your What and Why will be discussed at length in your Literature Review.)
- **How:** say what your methodology, theoretical approach etc. will be. (Note: Your How will be discussed at length in your Methodology.)

Introduction: An example of a good title

As an example, let us presume that the dissertation title is something like 'The role of a Special Educational Needs co-ordinator in primary school management structures'. Note: this is a made up title and

introduction and should not be taken literally. The *'What'*, *'Why'* and *'How'* outlined in the first paragraph would be something like this:

This dissertation examines the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator's (SENCO) role within a primary school management structure in one school in the North West of England. This dissertation will seek to interrogate to what extent the limitations of the SENCO role in the management structure of the school aid or hinder the following of Government SEN agendas and policies. It will argue that though this is a single case it is indicative of the role of the SENCO: its limitations and opportunities for supporting children with a Special Educational Need (SEN). The significance of the SENCO role is that it is often deemed as one of the key actors with responsibility for children with an SEN in a school. This dissertation will use a case-study methodology to examine the role of one SENCO in one school. It will use open ended interviews with the SENCO and the other senior managers within the school to assess the limitations and strengths of the SENCO's role (rather than the individual who fulfils that role) in delivering government policy at the local school level.

This introduction is now broken down into its three component parts: and each is examined in turn.

What:

FOCUS: This dissertation examines the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator's (SENCO) role within a primary school management structure in one school in the North West of England. This dissertation will seek to interrogate to what extent the limitations of the SENCO role in the management structure of the school aid or hinder the following of Government SEN agendas and policies.

PRINCIPAL ARGUMENT: It will argue that though this is a single case it is indicative of the role of the SENCO: its limitations and opportunities for supporting children with a Special Educational Need (SEN).

Here the focus and principal argument are stated first so the reader knows what the dissertation research is on and what the argument is

that will be made throughout the dissertation. As this dissertation is a case study this could have been mentioned in the first sentence as well.

The Why and the How can now be considered together.

Why:

IMPORTANCE: The significance of the SENCO role is that it is often deemed as one of the key actors with responsibility for children with an SEN in a school.

This highlights the importance of the SENCO role. To improve it further if this role is under researched it would be useful to mention this here.

Alternatively there may be disagreements about the usefulness of this role: again it would improve the sentence further to acknowledge this. To a certain extent this will highlight and emphasis further the rationale (reason for doing) your research.

How:

METHODOLOGY: This dissertation will use a case-study methodology to examine the role of one SENCO in one school. It will use open ended interviews with the SENCO and the other senior managers within the school to assess the limitations and strengths of the SENCO's role (rather than the individual who fulfils that role) in delivering government policy at the local school level.

The 'How' should be a very simple summary of the methodology adopted and the basic method you are using to gather your primary evidence.

