

This first session of how to write an IB essay starts with a short presentation of the basic essay structure and then focus on the very first part - the "**INTRODUCTION**". So, let's start. An essay contains three main parts:

1. **Introduction**
2. **Main body**
3. **Conclusion**

It's important to visibly clearly separate these three parts from each other. This is done by leaving a few empty rows between the parts (it's also done in the text but that we will talk about later). The main body is usually also divided into three parts:

1. **Background**
2. **Arguments**
3. **Discussion**

These parts should also be held apart visibly by an empty row or two. We will cover these parts later but as stated above - let's start with the way you present yourself to the "**heartless**", "**cold minded**", critical IB Examiner...

INTRODUCTION

The introduction should prepare the reader (examiner) and set the general tone of your answer. Although it's short, the introduction is important because first impressions can influence a reader's (examiner's) subsequent assessment of the answer.

In "*The Modern History Manual*" the authors answer the question "*What is the job of the introduction?*" in the following way: "*Very simply, it introduces the essay or the argument. It prepares the way for the main body of the essay*". They continue "*The introduction should be a statement of intent. It is important for the writer because it lays out a line of attack along which the essay will proceed. You may like to think of the essay as a journey; in the introduction you give the directions and the likely route that will be taken. You may even wish to say what things of interest may be seen along that route.*" (but you **NEVER** answer the research question in the introduction)

As mentioned before – the introduction has a profound effect on the reader (examiner). Everyone forms some sort of impression of a person the first time that they meet. So it is with an essay. The first thing that a reader (examiner) meets is the introduction.

What should the introduction then give to the reader (examiner)?

1. **The question**
 2. **An outline of the essay**
 3. **Transition**
- **The question (or an assessment of the topic):** A sentence or two shows that the writer (a) has understood the general area or topic for discussion and (b) has a good grasp of the relevant information.

- **An outline of the essay (line of argument, important theme or idea):** These sentences (two-three) should outline how the writer intend to proceed because (a) this is the main function of the introduction and (b) it proves that the specific question has been understood.
- **Transition:** This sentence is a smooth movement to the background – the first paragraph in the main body.

Your most startling, persuasive or important points should not go in the introduction; do not let the introduction steal your “**thunder**”. If you can satisfy the three requirements above the reader (examiner) should gain a good first impression of both the essay and the writer. In this way you should hold the reader’s (examiner’s) attention. What is more, if the introduction is clear, precise, forthright, logic and interesting the reader (examiner) will remember that initial impression and perhaps forgive any minor slips or passages that follows in the main text. It is well known that we remember best what comes first and what comes last in any period of study or reading. This is known as “*primacy*” and “*recency*” of memory. This should make us take extra care with introductions and conclusions. They will be the parts of the essay most likely to be remembered in any general impression.

INTRODUCTION - EXAMPLE 1

This is an introduction to an essay that received the highest mark in the British A-level course...

Question: *Discuss the assertion that Hitler bore sole responsibility for the outbreak of war in Europe in 1939*

Between the years of 1919 and 1939 the situation in Europe changed dramatically from the peace treaty at the end of the First World War to the outbreak of war in Europe in September 1939. The change escalated with the rise of the Nazi party in Germany and its leader Adolf Hitler. This essay will examine whether Hitler was solely to blame for the outbreak of war in Europe. The essay will examine each situation that arose between Hitler’s rise to power and the outbreak of war, analyzing it and giving evidence for the argument that Hitler bore sole responsibility and the evidence against that view.

Identification of the different parts in this introduction:

Between the years of 1919 and 1939 the situation in Europe changed dramatically from the peace treaty at the end of the First World War to the outbreak of war in Europe in September 1939. The change escalated with the rise of the Nazi party in Germany and its leader Adolf Hitler (***Historical context – where, when, what***). This essay will examine whether Hitler was solely to blame for the outbreak of war in Europe (***Question/Task presented***). The essay will examine each situation that arose between Hitler’s rise to power and the outbreak of war, analyzing it and giving evidence for the argument that Hitler bore sole responsibility and the evidence against that view (***Outline***).

INTRODUCTION - EXAMPLE 2

This is one of my many student introductions:

Question: *Analyze the long-term and the short-term causes of World War II.*

World War II broke out in September 1939 after the German attack on Poland. In the answer to the task of analyzing the long-term and the short-term causes of WWII the significance of the settlements after the First VK; the economic problems caused by the stock market crash in New York, the German rearmament, Hitler's aggressive foreign policy, and the failure of the League of Nations will first be addressed. After this, a focus on the more immediate causes, especially the last phase of Hitler's foreign policy, the appeasement policy of Great Britain and the unexpected Molotov - Ribbentrop Pact in August 1939 will be applied.

Identification of the different parts in this introduction:

World War II broke out in September 1939 after the German attack on Poland. (**Historical context – where, when, what**) In the answer to the task of analyzing the long-term and the short-term causes of WWII (**Question/Task presented**) the significance of the settlements after the First VK; the economic problems caused by the stock market crash in New York, the German rearmament, Hitler's aggressive foreign policy, and the failure of the League of Nations will first be addressed. After this, a focus on the more immediate causes, especially the last phase of Hitler's foreign policy, the appeasement policy of Great Britain and the unexpected Molotov - Ribbentrop Pact in August 1939 will be applied ("**Outline**").

INTRODUCTION - EXAMPLE 3

Another student introduction:

Question: *To what extent can Germany be held responsible for the outbreak of World War II?*

This essay will try to answer the question to what extent we can hold Germany responsible for the outbreak of WWII. The first part will concentrate on why many historians hold Germany guilty, like the German military rearmament and its aggressive foreign policy under Adolf Hitler and the NSDAP. These elements will be compared with the English/French appeasement policy, the failure of the League of Nations and the role of the Soviet Union.

Identification of the different parts in this introduction:

This essay will try to answer the question to what extent we can hold Germany responsible for the outbreak of WWII (**Question/Task presented**). The first part will concentrate on why many historians hold Germany guilty, like the German military rearmament and its aggressive foreign policy under Adolf Hitler and the NSDAP. These elements will be compared with the English/French appeasement policy, the failure of the League of Nations and the role of the Soviet Union ("**Outline**").

The historical context - where, when and what was presented in the first part of the essay - the background!