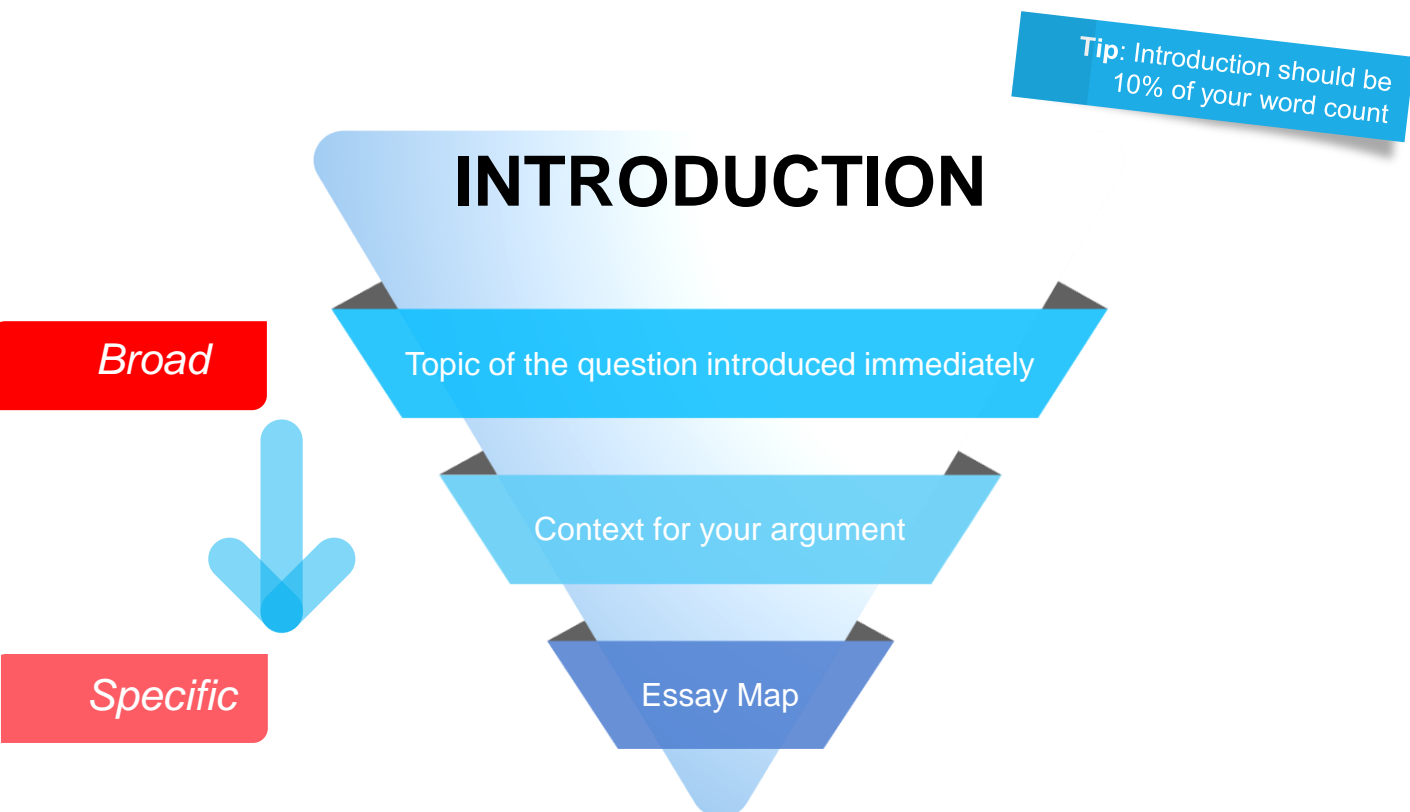# Introductions

Introductions have several key features. All of these ensure that the first thing read by your examiner will outline your piece appropriately. An introduction should:

- ✓ Communicate your **topic** clearly and effectively
- ✓ Show a level of contextual understanding of both your topic and the question being asked through use of **key words** and appropriate **definitions**
- ✓ Present your argument in a **logical fashion** and outline how you plan to approach it
- ✓ Signpost your essay by naming each main section you plan to write about in the order they will appear in the main body of your essay - this is your **Essay Map**
- ✓ Start broad (with your topic) and get more specific as you finish (by outlining your essay map)
- ✗ **Not** be written first. Often, it is helpful to wait until after you've written the rest of the essay before writing the introduction

Tip: Introduction should be 10% of your word count

INTRODUCTION

Broad

Topic of the question introduced immediately

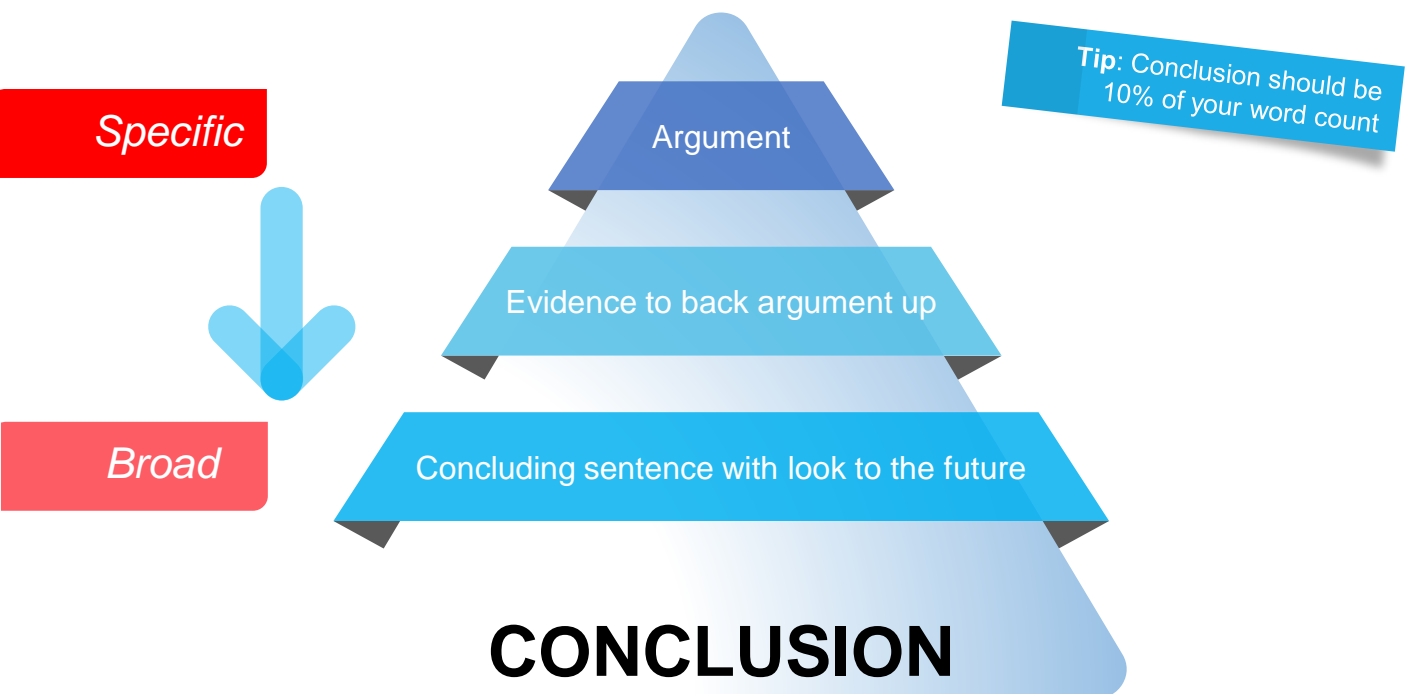Context for your argument

Specific

Essay Map

For several decades, the illegal drug trade has cost countless lives around the globe, generating a worldwide debate about the approach societies should take to tackle the issue. In the Irish context, this has led to the question of whether a change in policy, towards the legalisation of drugs, might actually be of more benefit than harm to society. In order to address this question, this essay will firstly examine the potential effect of such a policy change on health outcomes for drug users. Secondly, it will explore the potential financial impact of such a change on the state. Finally, international comparisons will be drawn on to elucidate whether similar policy changes in other countries have had positive or negative social consequences.

Why is this topic of concern?

Central argument clearly expressed

How the central argument will be tackled – in the same order it will appear as in text

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Conclusions

Conclusions have several key features. All of these are used to tie your entire piece together. A conclusion should:

- ✓ Clearly state the main answer / argument / take home point of your piece and how it relates to **the question**
- ✓ Summarise - **not repeat** - the evidence used to reach your final answer
- ✓ Look towards the future by showing the next logical step after this piece of work. What would be the **next step** to understanding this topic better?
- ✓ Start specific (with your answer) and get broader as you finish (with a look to the future)
- ✗ **Not** introduce any new evidence or ideas

Specific

Broad

Argument

Evidence to back argument up

Concluding sentence with look to the future

CONCLUSION

Tip: Conclusion should be 10% of your word count

In conclusion, the evidence suggests that the legalisation of drugs in Ireland would likely be of more benefit than harm to society. Firstly, reframing drug misuse as a public health issue would lead to the re-categorisation of drug addicts as patients, not criminals, allowing for the reduction of harm in a non-judgemental fashion. Secondly, the legalisation of drugs would be financially beneficial for the state, as the regularisation of controlled substances would lead to an increase in tax revenue. Finally, international comparisons demonstrate that legalising drugs actually reduces drug deaths and undermines organised crime. While there is clearly an argument to be made for the legalisation of drugs, further research is required to investigate whether such a radical change in policy would be palatable for the Irish political class and for Irish society at large.

Main argument of the essay

The points that were used to support the argument

A concluding sentence that looks to the future

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