

Academic writing: Writing Introductions

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Adapted from Anthony Haynes, *The Professional and Higher Partnership*



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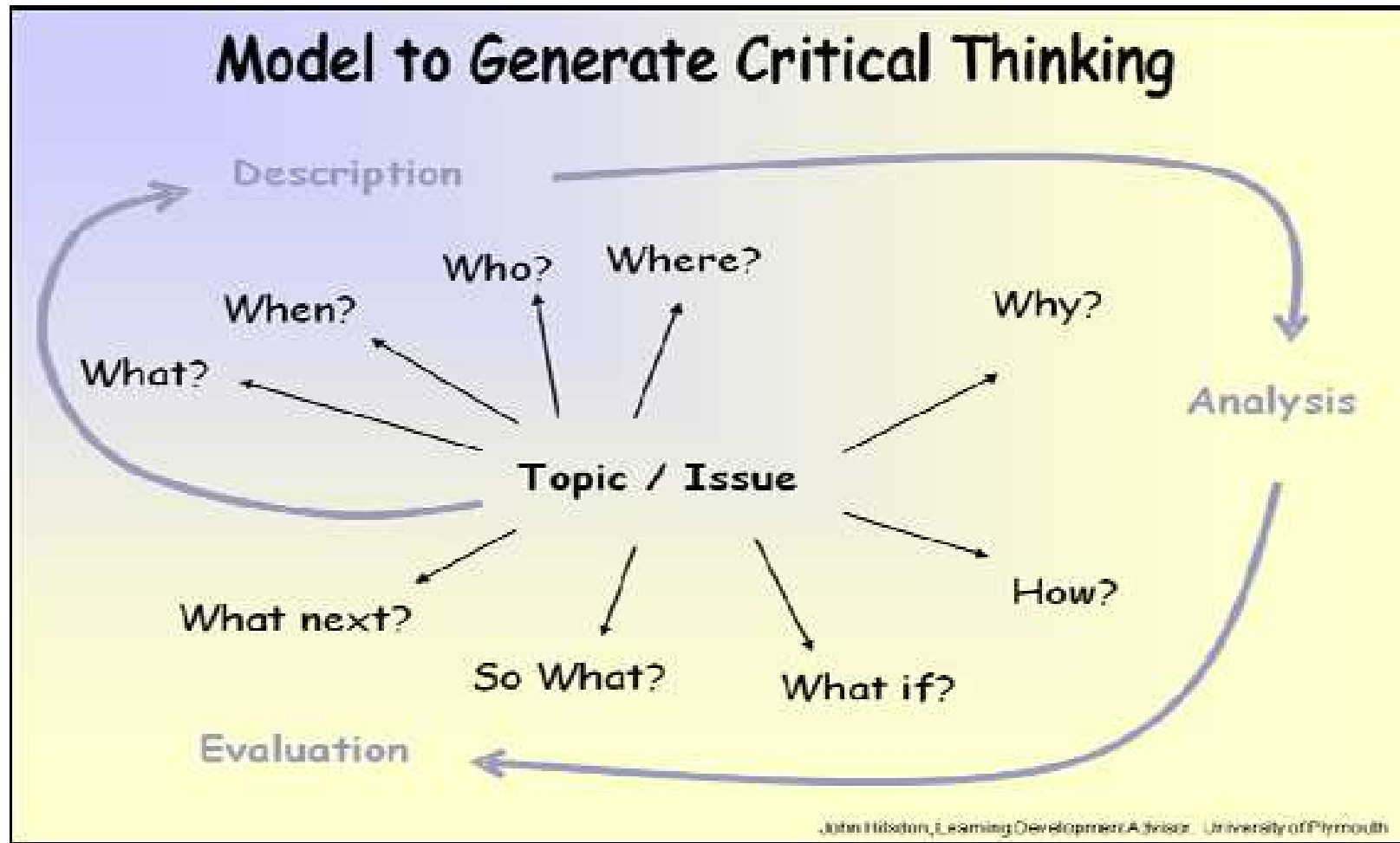
The one question you'll never be asked....

**“Write down everything you know
about this topic.”**

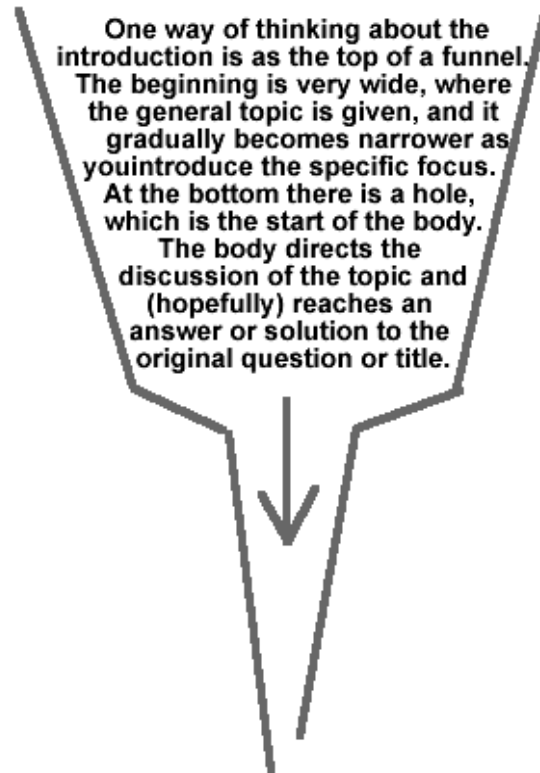
Exam questions ask you to answer a
question or solve a problem.

Quality not quantity!

Model to generate Critical Thinking



What shape is your introduction?



What shape is your introduction?



The structure of your introduction...



The structure of your introduction...

It depends

The structure of your introduction..

*Your
discipline*

*Type of
assignment*

*Tutor's
preference*

*Your
preference*

Your introduction could include...

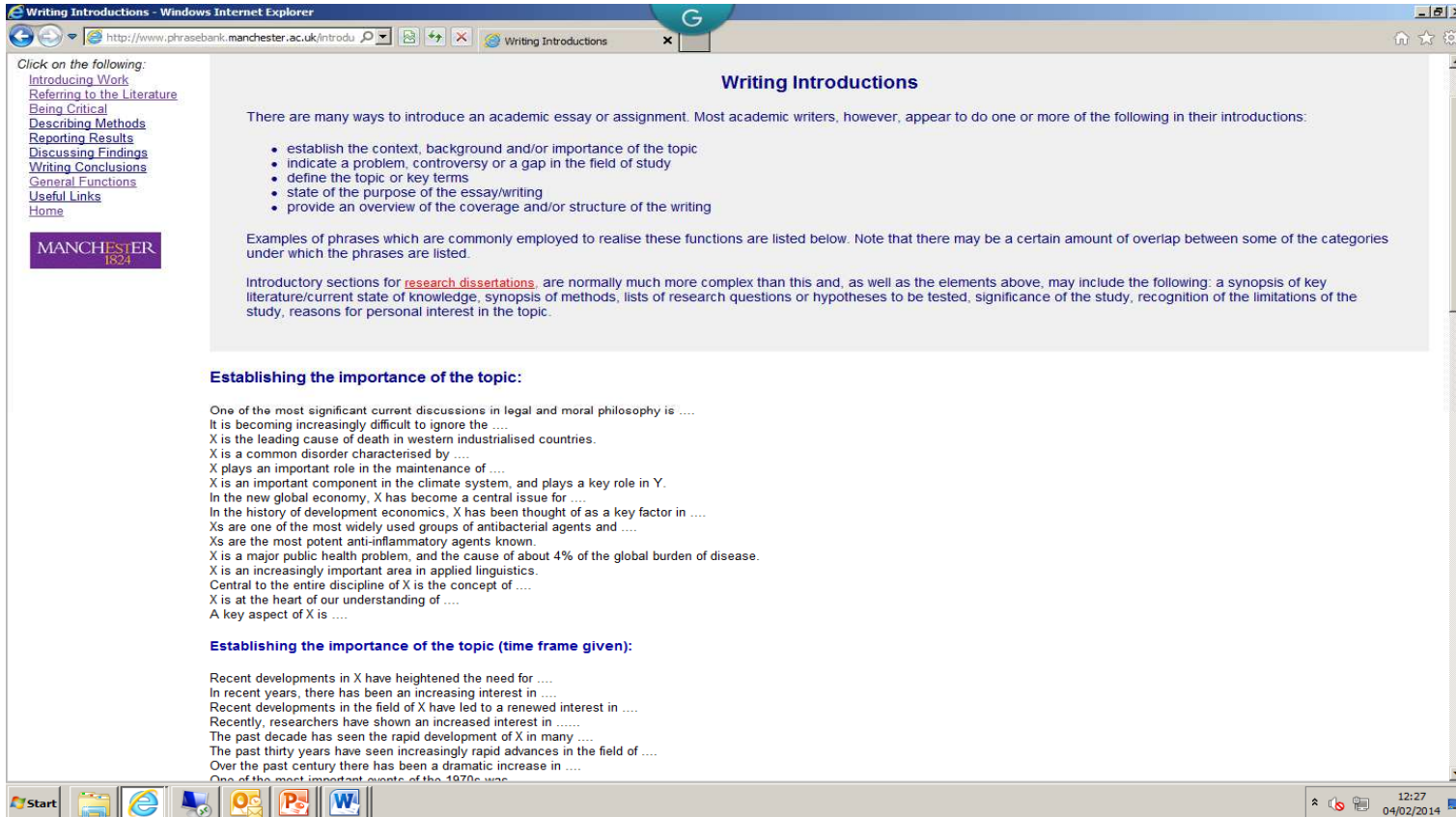
- **What** is the question about?
- **Why** is the question important?
- **How** are you going to answer it?

The introduction may...

- begin with a general statement about why the topic is important in your area of study
- set out the main idea of the essay
- sum up in one or two statements your overall answer to the question
- specify the scope of your essay
- outline the structure of your essay
- define important terms
- explain the methodology to be used and why it's being used
- include a quote to grab the reader's attention

(Adapted from: "Introductions and Conclusions", Learning and Teaching Unit, UniSA and the Royal Literary Fund.)

Useful language for introductions...



The screenshot shows a Windows Internet Explorer browser window displaying the 'Writing Introductions' page from the Manchester University Academic Phrasebank. The page title is 'Writing Introductions'. The main content area contains the following text:

There are many ways to introduce an academic essay or assignment. Most academic writers, however, appear to do one or more of the following in their introductions:

- establish the context, background and/or importance of the topic
- indicate a problem, controversy or a gap in the field of study
- define the topic or key terms
- state the purpose of the essay/writing
- provide an overview of the coverage and/or structure of the writing

Examples of phrases which are commonly employed to realise these functions are listed below. Note that there may be a certain amount of overlap between some of the categories under which the phrases are listed.

Introductory sections for research dissertations, are normally much more complex than this and, as well as the elements above, may include the following: a synopsis of key literature/current state of knowledge, synopsis of methods, lists of research questions or hypotheses to be tested, significance of the study, recognition of the limitations of the study, reasons for personal interest in the topic.

Establishing the importance of the topic:

One of the most significant current discussions in legal and moral philosophy is
It is becoming increasingly difficult to ignore the
X is the leading cause of death in western industrialised countries.
X is a common disorder characterised by
X plays an important role in the maintenance of
X is an important component in the climate system, and plays a key role in Y.
In the new global economy, X has become a central issue for
In the history of development economics, X has been thought of as a key factor in
Xs are one of the most widely used groups of antibacterial agents and
Xs are the most potent anti-inflammatory agents known.
X is a major public health problem, and the cause of about 4% of the global burden of disease.
X is an increasingly important area in applied linguistics.
Central to the entire discipline of X is the concept of
X is at the heart of our understanding of
A key aspect of X is

Establishing the importance of the topic (time frame given):

Recent developments in X have heightened the need for
In recent years, there has been an increasing interest in
Recent developments in the field of X have led to a renewed interest in
Recently, researchers have shown an increased interest in
The past decade has seen the rapid development of X in many
The past thirty years have seen increasingly rapid advances in the field of
Over the past century there has been a dramatic increase in
One of the most important events of the 1970s was

The browser's address bar shows the URL: <http://www.phrasebank.manchester.ac.uk/introductions.htm>. The taskbar at the bottom shows the Start button and several application icons, including Internet Explorer, Word, and PowerPoint. The system tray in the bottom right corner shows the time as 12:27 and the date as 04/02/2014.

Academic Phrasebank from Manchester University:
<http://www.phrasebank.manchester.ac.uk/introductions.htm>

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To help you develop the skills needed for academic study.

Go to the Academic tab of the UEA Portal and look for the module DOS-LET