

Every piece of coursework requires an introduction (generally 10% of word count) and a conclusion (generally around 5-10% of word count)

The introduction

- presents relevant background information that provides a rationale for this piece of writing. This can be research findings and/or real-world information that shows why the issue is important.
- outlines the aim and scope of the essay.
- often indicates the writer's position

The conclusion

- Summarises the “take-home” message for the reader - restates the main argument made in the essay.
- Refers back to the issue raised in the introduction
- A common mistake is to conclude by summarising the structure of the essay – focus on issues, not structure

‘the first section discussed the importance of planning, and illustrated this with corporate examples **XXX**

‘The importance of planning cannot be understated: as the examples provided show, failure to plan can lead to significant financial losses’ **✓✓✓**

- Considers future implications or possibly recommendations

NOTE: In an essay, you don't need to use the headings introduction and conclusion, but you do in a report. ‘Main Body’ is not a heading – where you are using headings and sub-headings in the main body of your coursework, these should reflect the content of the sections.

The reader should be able to read the introduction and the conclusion and know

- **Why the issue is important**
- **what the structure of the essay is – what issues are covered**
- **what the main arguments are**
- **what the writer's position is**