

FCE - Writing introductions to essays

In Fce you will **always** need to:

- plan the essay by brainstorming ideas
- organize your ideas
- write an introduction and conclusion
- read your work through and make corrections

The introduction is very important because it is the first thing the examiner will see. A good introduction has two main elements:

1. restating the question
2. explaining what you're going to do in your essay

Restating the question

The examiner already knows which question you're answering! So, why do you need to do this?

1. Restating the question shows the examiner you have understood the question.
2. It helps you focus.
3. It's an opportunity to demonstrate your range of vocabulary and your ability to manipulate sentence constructions.

Example question: What are the benefits of living in big cities, as opposed to rural areas? What are the problems of rural areas and how can they be solved?

Vocabulary

- Underline the key words in the question.
- Think of synonyms that would work *in this context*.

benefit = advantage, pro, plus

big city = metropolis, urban area

as opposed to = compared with, in comparison to

rural area = countryside, in the country

problem = disadvantage, minus, drawback

solve = resolve, overcome

Sentence construction

- Look at the way the sentences are constructed e.g. verbs or noun phrases.

the benefits of living in...; how can they be solved?

- Think of ways to change them.

For example,

- change a verb construction to a noun construction:

the benefits of life in...

or

- change passive to active:

how we can solve them

You now have eight things you could change in order to state the question in your own words and show that you have control over English. You don't have to use all the changes you thought of and it doesn't matter if you haven't got as many possibilities as have been included here.

So, the first two sentences of my introduction might look like this:

1. There are many advantages of life in urban areas when compared with country living. The question to consider is: what are the disadvantages and how can we overcome them?

Explaining what you're going to do

This just needs to be one more sentence which briefly outlines how you are going to answer the question. Useful phrases are:

I will (attempt to/try to) discuss / look at / consider / compare / examine...

So, I can add a sentence like this to my introduction:

I will compare a typical city in Europe with a countryside area and try to give suggestions for solving the problems found with cities.