

## 7.1

### 'Goldilocks and the Three Introductions'

Below are three versions of an introduction for an assignment. Your job is to pick the best one out of the three. None of them is perfect, but one of them, we think, does the job of an introduction better than the other two. Have a look at the three, decide which of them you think is best and why, and then scroll down to have a look at our thinking.

Bear in mind the advice in Chapter 7 that none of its recommendations should be followed too slavishly. Here are some key questions to help you to assess the examples:

- Does the introduction tell you what the essay is about?
- Does it give an indication of the arguments and the order they will appear?
- For a full introduction does it highlight the major debates behind the question?
- Does it define terms where necessary?
- If appropriate, does it define a position?

**Essay question: Outline how and why audiences have been researched in terms of 'effects' and 'uses'.**

- 1 When investigating the complex links between the media and the audience, it can be said that their relationship is 'mutually constitutive' (Evans, 2005, p. 2). As a result of this relationship, audiences can be researched using many different methods and in many different contexts. This essay will consider how and why the audience is researched in terms of 'effects' and 'uses' in particular. Research that addresses the audience in terms of 'effects' usually looks at the causal effect that the media have on their audience in terms of behaviour and attitude. When looking at the audience in terms of 'uses' a different perspective is used and the research concentrates on how the audience uses the media and also how the audience can affect their production. To consider media research, its uses by and effects on the audience, this essay will also look at how the research is done. This is significant as it allows the results and the relationship between media and audiences to be properly understood.
- 2 There are many ways of examining the relationship between media and audiences. This essay will look at how and why the audience is researched in terms of 'effects' and 'uses' in particular. 'Effects' means the way the media affect their audience; 'use' means the way the audience use the media they have.
- 3 When investigating the complex links between the media and the audience, it can be said that their relationship is 'mutually constitutive' (Evans, 2005, p. 2). This means that the media and the audience mutually influence each other; it is not a one-way process in either direction. This is demonstrated in research on many different forms of media and audience reactions such as the extensive research into soap operas. Audiences can be researched using many different methods and in many different contexts. This essay will look at how and why the audience is researched in terms of 'effects' and 'uses' in particular. When looking at the audience in terms of 'effects', the research usually looks at the causal effect that the media have on their audience in terms of behaviour and attitude. When looking at the audience in terms of 'uses' a different perspective is used; the research concentrates on how the audience uses the media and also how the audience can affect their production. Audience effects research is often laboratory-based and heavily controlled. When looking at the media and their uses and effects on the audience, this essay will also look at how the research is done. This is also very important as it allows the results and the relationship to be properly understood. I will conclude that effects and uses research shows most clearly the mutually constitutive relationship between the two and hence is most fruitful for examining in depth how we use our media.

## Tutor's comments

<p>1 When investigating the complex links between the media and the audience, it can be said that their relationship is 'mutually constitutive' (Evans, 2005, p. 2). As a result of this relationship, audiences can be researched using many different methods and in many different contexts. This essay will consider how and why the audience is researched in terms of 'effects' and 'uses' in particular. Research that addresses the audience in terms of 'effects' usually looks at the causal effect that the media has on its audience in terms of behaviour and attitude. When looking at the audience in terms of 'uses' a different perspective is used and the research concentrates on how the audience uses the media and also how the audience can affect its production. To consider media research, its uses by and effects on the audience, this essay will also look at how the research is done. This is significant as it allows the results and the relationship between media and audiences to be properly understood.</p>	<p>This is quite good. It gets in one of the key concepts, the idea of 'mutual constitution', which thereby frames the position of the essay. It deals with the subject of the essay. It defines the two terms 'effects' and 'uses', though the definitions could be sharper. It signals the intention to deal with research methods as well as the concepts. It signposts a clear 'order of service', so the reader knows what is coming next. The conclusion, however, is not signposted.</p> <p>It is a bit wordy, e.g. 'When looking at the audience in terms of "uses" a different perspective is used' could be 'In terms of "uses"...'.</p> <p>Result: close to baby bear's porridge but could be better.</p>
<p>2 There are many ways of examining the relationship between media and audiences. This essay will look at how and why the audience is researched in terms of 'effects' and 'uses' in particular. 'Effects' means the way the media affect their audience; 'use' means the way the audience use the media they have.</p>	<p>Brief and to the point. Too brief in fact. It does make clear the focus of the essay, and the meanings attributed to each of the terms, which are both good. It does not, however, introduce any key concepts other than those which are the focus of the essay, so there is no clue to the reader as to how the writer is going to handle them. (It might even suggest that the writer hasn't thought that through properly.) It also gives no clue as to what the conclusion might be.</p> <p>There is no signposting: the reader isn't given any indication of the main points or direction of the essay.</p> <p>While it has two very good assets – focus and definitions – this is a mummy bear porridge.</p>

3 When investigating the complex links between the media and the audience, it can be said that their relationship is 'mutually constitutive' (Evans, 2005, p. 2). This means that the media and the audience mutually influence each other; it is not a one-way process in either direction. This is demonstrated in research on many different forms of media and audience reactions such as the extensive research into soap operas. Audiences can be researched using many different methods and in many different contexts. This essay will look at how and why the audience is researched in terms of 'effects' and 'uses' in particular. When looking at the audience in terms of 'effects', the research usually looks at the causal effect that the media have on their audience in terms of behaviour and attitude. When looking at the audience in terms of 'uses' a different perspective is used; the research concentrates on how the audience uses the media and also how the audience can affect their production. Audience effects research is often laboratory-based and heavily controlled. When looking at the media and their uses and effects on the audience, this essay will also look at how the research is done. This is also very important as it allows the results and the relationship to be properly understood. I will conclude that effects and uses research shows most clearly the mutually constitutive relationship between the two and hence is most fruitful for examining in depth how we use our media.

This has everything that number one has and more. It introduces a key concept and then starts discussing it; the discussion should be left to the main body.

Again with the section on audience research, the topic is introduced well enough but then gets into discussion.

It has a sentence on what the conclusion is going to be – this is very good because it tells the reader where the essay is going. It is also good because it highlights again the key concept of mutual constitution, making it clear that this will be a fulcrum of the essay.

Despite that there's far too much flab. This is a daddy bear porridge.