



Introductions

What is an Introduction?

- the first paragraph of a paper
- an overview of the entire paper
- your first chance to impress readers and give them a reason to continue reading the paper

Creating the Ideal Introduction

Writing an introduction is as easy as ABC. **A**dd interest, **B**ring in background, and **C**reate thesis.

Add interest

You never get another chance to make a first impression. This first impression is up to you. How can you best get your reader to pay attention to the paper? There are many options from which to choose.

Option 1: Astonisher

Shock the reader by giving a startling statistic or fact. Be sure to make sure that this information is true.

People like to know what they are eating, but many are unaware that processed foods are legally allowed to contain tiny pieces of insects like mealworms and roaches.

Option 2: Descriptive

Describe an event that gives the reader a visual picture to help set the scene of the paper.

That day was not unlike any other. The blue sky sent a cool breeze which made the field come alive, dancing to the playful tune of the season.

Option 3: Quotation

Use incredible words spoken by incredible people. Make sure the quote summarizes the essay, and connect the quote to the topic of the paper.

“One’s destination is never a place but rather a new way of looking at things,” says American novelist Henry Miller. The American people, however, have a grim glimpse of the future.

Option 4: Question

Use a question when it is the most important point of the essay, and make sure that the essay serves as the answer to the question.

Where would I be without my God?

Option 5: List

Grab the reader’s attention with a list that will make the reader want to know how the things relate together.

Books, beer, ballgames, and babes can sum up to today’s college experience for freshmen males.

Option 6: Comparison

Find similarities between your topic and something the reader is familiar with to create an analogy.

The fighter craft soared through the air like a seagull.

Option 7: Epigram

An epigram is a short witty saying. This beginning should take a cliché (an overused expression) with a new twist. Common clichés should be avoided.

He was too foolish to commit folly.



Option 8: One Word

A single word to capture the reader's attention.

Courage. That's what it takes to win wars and influence people.

Option 9: Anecdote

A short narrative (story) illustrating a point that relates to the main focus of the essay.

Max begins his day before the sun wakes up. Putting in twelve-hour work days has become routine just to make ends meet.

Option 10: Definition

Avoid using dictionary definitions especially for common terms. Only use it if the word is out-of-the-ordinary or something that your reader will not understand.

"Graffiti" refers to words or phrases written on public sidewalks or buildings.

Bring in Background

After you have captured the reader's attention, you need to give them a good understanding of what the paper is going to be about. This can be done through a historical, situational or philosophical approach.

Many writers find it easiest to write the introduction after they have determined what will be discussed in the body paragraphs in order to give the reader appropriate background information.

Historical

Describe events that have happened in the past. This can be done by giving a brief biography of the person(s) being discussed, discussion of aspects of historical periods and movements, or briefly examining or analyzing a sequence of events.

Situational

Give the reader information about a particular situation or set of circumstances. You may want to describe what a particular location, environment, or atmosphere looks like or provide the conditions that lead up to an event. In a literary analysis, this may be accomplished by giving a brief plot summary.

Philosophical

Discuss great thoughts, beliefs, assumptions, fundamental truths, or answer to man's most puzzling questions. For example: Is there a God? What is Knowledge? What is good?

Create a Thesis

A thesis statement acts as the road map to your paper, telling the reader what the paper is about. This single sentence is typically the last sentence of the introduction paragraph. For more information about how to form a thesis statement, refer to the Thesis and Topic Sentence Handout.