
WRITING AN INTRODUCTION

A good introduction tells the reader what the essay's topic is, and what to expect when reading the rest of the essay. This is also the writer's opportunity to build interest and provide background information on the topic. Before beginning to write an introduction, it is helpful to first write an outline for your entire essay. You will also need to decide what your thesis is and what your main points are before writing your introduction.

1. INTRODUCING YOUR TOPIC

The introduction should start with an attention-grabbing sentence. This sentence can be many different things and still work well. Is it an interesting fact, quote, or definition? Or maybe consider using a question that you will be answering within the essay, or an opposing opinion you intend to argue against. This is meant to 'hook' the reader and make them want to continue reading your essay.

2. BUILDING INTEREST

Now that you have piqued the reader's interest, you need to keep it. Build the reader's interest by providing background information on your topic in a couple of sentences. If there is information the reader may need to understand the main body of your essay, this is your opportunity to give it to them. As an example, when writing an essay that analyzes the themes within a storybook, you would want to include a summary of the story in the introduction. For an alternative example, when writing an essay that discusses the intention behind a painting, you would want to include a summary of what the painting looks like.

3. PREVIEW OF MAIN POINTS

To give the reader a preview of what the essay will be about, list your main points next. Summarize each of your main points with a sentence or two. These main points should be the ones discussed later in the body paragraphs of your writing as you try to prove your thesis statement.

4. THESIS STATEMENT

Before you can tie up your introduction, you must include your thesis statement. This is the final part of the introduction as it should come last. For more tips on this section, please refer to the thesis statement handout.