

Introductions

Let's Get Started

Why Should We Care About Introductions?

Introductions are essential to the foundation of your writing. They serve to provide the context and background that the reader will need to understand the topic and usually introduce the argument that's central to the paper. They provide a first impression of the topic, quality, and voice of the writing and influence the reader's interest in what you have to say. They're also great at providing the reader with an overview of what to expect.

Strategies for Building Fruitful Introductions

Consider the Process

Before you begin writing your introduction, consider your process. The introduction need not be the first section of the paper drafted: You could even write it last! Just remember to keep everything focused to a central claim as you write the body text. It is also reasonable to come back to the introduction throughout the writing process to revise it, especially between drafts.

Consider writing an [outline](#). This can help you brainstorm organization, such as the relationship between your thesis and the arguments you'll make to support it. This gives you a better idea of what you'll be introducing to the reader.

Keep on Track

The introduction will help the reader to transition from their daily life and into your topic and argument. Feel free to start with the most general information that is essential to your claim and work your way into specifics as you write. It can be helpful to keep in mind, however, that if you're too vague the introduction may stray beyond the confines of the essay, or won't adequately support the [thesis](#).

You will likely establish the thesis at the end of the introduction once you've provided other relevant information. You may also outline what the body of text will be going over to help keep things organized.

Develop an Effective Hook

Introductions have the potential to hook the reader in and build initial interest. They can also help to integrate readers into the topic they'll be reading about. To do this, consider opening with a compelling or thought-provoking question, anecdote, quote, or scenario. The assignment type will likely influence the type of hook that's most appropriate. For instance, essays written for the social or health sciences tend to be more concise and straightforward, whereas essays about literature or humanities may be more artistic, but still remain relevant to the central claim. Consider what your audience might find compelling, important, or what would make your writing stand out.

Don't Make it a Fact Sheet

Avoid listing out basic facts or starting with dictionary definitions of words. Include only the basic facts that will be relevant to the reader, perhaps the titles and authors of works that will be discussed in a literary analysis. Additional information on your sources can be included in your [list of sources](#) instead, which will be required in most assignments for proper attribution.

Rather than listing a definition from a dictionary, it's better to define important terms with your own words and within the context of the essay's topic. If the word isn't paramount to understanding the thesis, consider defining it within the body of the text instead.

Need Help?

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