

Writing an Introduction

A well-written introduction contains a **lead**, which attracts and focuses the reader's interest, provides necessary background information, and leads into the **thesis statement**, which is the specific statement of the main idea (claim) of your essay.

At no point should you make the announcement "I am going to . . ." in your introduction.

Lead

1. Begin your lead with a **hook** or attention getter. A hook is a broad, general **statement** which applies to more than the specific work you are writing about, attracts the reader's interest, and encourages them to go on and read the essay. The statement should relate in some way to the main point of your essay. DO NOT pose a question to hook your reader. Likewise, DO NOT define a word to hook your reader.

2. Supply your reader with the **background information** necessary to understand your essay. In a literary essay, introduce the book title (*italicized* when typing) and the author (make sure you spell the name correctly) and write a few sentences describing its premise (what the book is mainly about). DO NOT get into a lengthy summary, just provide enough information so anyone who isn't familiar with the work gets a basic idea of what it's about.

If it is an informative or argumentative essay, make sure your reader has a sense of the broader context of your topic and the main arguments on either side of the issue. What does your reader need to know in order to understand the assertion you are making in your essay?

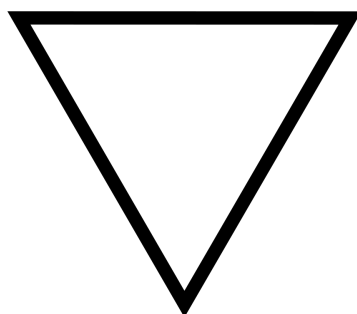
Thesis Statement

The **thesis statement** is a very *specific* statement which responds to the essay prompt and expresses the **main claim** of your essay. It should not exceed two sentences. It offers your readers a quick and easy-to-follow explanation of what the essay will focus on. If you are responding to an essay prompt, the thesis statement is the direct response to that prompt.

For more information on writing an effective thesis, click this [link](#).

A Visual Representation of the Introduction

Think of the introduction as an inverted triangle, you start with the general and end with the specific argument you are making in the essay.



⇨ Hook

⇨ Background information

⇨ Thesis statement