

# How to Write Intros That Don't Suck

So here are the basics every good intro needs:

**A hook:** This is an engaging sentence or two to “hook” the reader into reading - I always think about the “GET OVER HERE!” move that Scorpion does in Mortal Kombat. This is pretty artistic stuff, so it's hard. There are a couple of simple ways to do it:

- **Go big or go small:** Either make what you're talking about *personal* - to the reader or to *you* - or make it *global* - show how what you're writing about makes a difference for everyone. Telling a personal story that involves the topic helps make it real; explaining how your topic is a major issue for everyone makes it feel important. Whichever direction you take, here's some ways to *do* that.
- **A dramatic quote:** A really dramatic line from an expert or someone involved in the topic can get things rolling nicely.

- **A relevant story:** A personal story or one from a newspaper can introduce the topic in a way that gets your reader hooked.
- **A shocking fact:** 10,000 intros were effective when using shocking facts!

### **Background of the topic (context!):**

- **Define important terms:** Does your topic involve some key terms that might not be familiar to your readers? Then define them in your intro - you know from personal experience how quickly your brain tends to turn off if you don't know what the author's talking about.
- **Give the history of the subject:** Who researched this first? Where did the idea come from, or when did it get really big?
- **Introduce the issue/conflict:** What's the major issue or problem? This leads up to ...

**The big question:** Drop what question you'll be asking at the end of your introduction. If you've led up to it, it should

feel natural - it should be what your audience has started wondering about.

**Preview:** Give your audience a roadmap to what you're going to explain or argue in your essay. This can be a quick overview of the smaller questions you'll be answering in order to answer your Big Question.