

WRITING EFFECTIVE INTRODUCTIONS



THE WRITING
— CENTER —

WRITING INTRODUCTIONS

Purpose of an introduction:

An introduction transports your readers from “their” world into “your” world of complex thinking, ideas, and analysis. A good introduction should, therefore, announce your topic, provide essential context, indicate the focus of the essay, and engage readers’ interest.

Basic components of an introduction:

Your introduction must include the following:

- 1) Hook:** Anything interesting that grabs readers’ attention and pulls them into your text.
- 2) Transition:** A sentence that connects the hook with your thesis.
- 3) Thesis:** A sentence about the argument or main point of your text.

When should you write your introduction?

There is no right or wrong answer to this. You can work on your introduction in the middle of the drafting process or at the very end when you are in a better position to see the bigger picture of your work. Don’t think your introduction should be written first.



Composing an Introduction:

General-to-Specific

Moving from a general idea to specific details, and concluding with your thesis is a standard way of writing introductions.

Human beings are social animals. They are designed to operate in people-based settings. In fact, face-to-face conversations are considered to be the most effective in explaining ideas, persuading listeners, and sustaining healthy, long-term relationships. Although the perceived benefits of direct encounters are quite apparent, some downfalls often go unnoticed. This paper will argue how face to face interactions are far dangerous in comparison to the social media interactions that people typically find shady and questionable.

Hook: a general idea that interests the reader and introduces the topic.

Transition: connects the hook to the thesis statement

Thesis: the overall claim of the paper

Background Information

Providing background information necessary for understanding your topic is an effective way to start your introduction.

Throughout the history of art, the human form has intrigued artisans and their audiences. While the human form has always been an acceptable muse, the nude female form still today stirs up controversy. When Praxiteles sculpted Aphrodite of Knidos (350-340 B.C.), of the Greek late classical period, a risqué nude sculpture that put the island of Knidos on the map as a must-see tourist attraction, the idea of a nude goddess had never been rendered. Approximately 1,100 years after Aphrodite of Knidos, Sandro Botticelli depicted the goddess Venus nude in his painting Birth of Venus (ca. 1482) during the early Italian Renaissance, a time when the frantic Dominican monk Girolamo Savonarola preached strict boundaries and improvement in society. Although there is exquisite beauty in both works by Praxiteles and Botticelli, there are also distinctions that allow each piece to stand on its own.

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Vivid Story (Anecdote)

Starting with a story sets the right context for your text, creates a personal connection and makes readers comfortable.

She was born twice: first, as a baby girl, on a typical scorching Nigeria day of May 1935; and then again, as a young man, in a Pediatrics hospital near New York City, in January of 1965. It was her second birth that transformed her identity as she closed the hatred in which she had opened her eyes. Time had evolved; she succeeded in changing her identity, and in many ways, her destiny. It is very unfortunate to see African families believing the birth of females as an evil omen. The following discussion will show how early education for both males and females is the only logical way to put an end to this mental corruption.

Hook: a specific example or story that interests the reader and introduces the topic.

Transition: connects the hook to the thesis statement

Thesis: the overall claim of the paper

Specific Details

Starting your introduction with specific details about your topic appeals to readers' curiosity and helps establish a visual picture of what your paper is about.

First example:

Hands flying, green eyes flashing, and feet stomping, Jenny howled at her younger sister Emma. People walked by gawking at the spectacle as Jenny's grunts emanated through the mall. Emma sucked at her thumb, trying to appear nonchalant. Jenny's blond hair stood almost on end. She spoke so forcefully that her words could barely be understood. Jenny was angry. Very angry. Many people like Jenny do not know how to control their emotions in public spaces. Although the public display of emotions is not prohibited by law, its consequences are questionable in the long run and are known to impact the healthy growth and development in children negatively.

Hook: a specific example or story that interests the reader and introduces the topic.

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Second example:

In "The Hermit's Story," Rick Bass observes "an ice storm, following seven days of snow; the vast fields and drifts of snow turning to sheets of glazed ice that shine and shimmer blue in the moonlight as if the color is being fabricated not by the bending and absorption of light but by some chemical reaction within the glossy ice; as if the source of all blueness lies somewhere up here in the north—the core of it beneath one of those frozen fields; as if blue is a thing that emerges, in some parts of the world, from the soil itself, after the sun goes down." When the burnt orange mass sets and the creation freezes temporarily, one is forced to question the unseen, whether asleep, awake, or dreaming. Matters of unseen realities have always interested the logical mind, and they force man to question the structural design of the environment that envelopes him.

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Quotation

Starting your introduction with a quotation makes it interactive and more appealing to your reader.

“People paid more attention to the way I talked than what I said!” exclaimed the young woman from Brooklyn, New York, in the movie *American Tongues*. This woman’s home dialect interferes with people taking her seriously because they see her as a cartoonish stereotype of a New Yorker. The effects on this woman indicate the widespread judgment that occurs about nonstandard dialects. People around America judge those with nonstandard dialects. This type of assessment can make some people feel ashamed, which eventually forces them to change their language identity.

Hook: a quotation that interests the reader and introduces the topic.

Transition: connects the hook to the thesis statement

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Statistics

Starting with interesting statistics grabs the reader’s attention and makes your text look credible.

Twitter is the second most popular social media platform in the world! Research tells us that 89% of users enjoy the opportunity and freedom to express their ideas, thoughts, opinions, and emotions. Although it is a great tool to share information, many people have started exploiting this platform. Twitter has now turned into a corruptive platform where people share rumors, ridicule others, and spread false news that negatively impacts people’s thinking, beliefs, and behaviors.

Hook: a specific statistic that interests the reader and introduces the topic.

Transition: connects the hook to the thesis statement

Thesis: the overall claim of the paper



Thought-Provoking Question

Posing a question is an effective way to start because it helps guide the reader's thinking regarding your topic.

Are colors and feelings inter-dependent? How are colors seen, experienced, and perceived? Does a person have to know “black” and “white” before he starts recognizing “colorful colors?” To answer these questions, one must first understand what color is. In this paper, colors and their impact on human emotions will be explored from a theoretical background.

Hook: specific questions that interests the reader and introduce the topic.

Transition: connects the hook to the thesis statement

Thesis: the overall claim of the paper

A Misperception or Puzzling Scenario

Mentioning a common misperception that your thesis will argue against is also an excellent way to start your introduction.

Mark Bauerlein, the author of *The Dumbest Generation* [Or, Don't Trust Anyone Under 30], states there is compelling evidence in the form of statistics, surveys, and studies, to suggest that the current generation is significantly less intelligent than previous ones. However, a big problem with Bauerlein's argument is that the current generation actually tests higher on I.Q. scores than previous generations. Thus, we are presented with a contradiction that requires more in-depth research and thought to understand, unravel, and clarify.

Hook: a specific misperception that interests the reader and introduces the topic.

Transition: connects the hook to the thesis statement

Thesis: the overall claim of the paper

Broader Conversations

Explaining broader conversations about your topic helps readers understand your participation, position, and argument better.

In 1789, Britain's eyes were fixed on France's turbulent political arena. In just a few decades, France's once-formidable divine-right monarchy had been reduced to a state of relative powerlessness by frequent warfare, burgeoning social unrest, and an urgent financial crisis from the nation's incessant militarism and the court's lavish expenditures. As France's sociopolitical scene intensified, noteworthy events found their way onto London stages with a flourish of historicity, drama, and hyperbole. These plays, consequently, provide a revealing lens for examining Britain's response to and interpretation of the initial events of the French Revolution. Despite their decidedly French subject matter, the plays' intense professions of British nationalism and their inclusion of Englishmen in leading roles suggest that Britain celebrated the rise of liberty and democracy in France, but refused to honor the role of French citizens in promoting these virtues.

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Hook: a bigger conversation that interests the reader and introduces the topic.

Transition: connects the hook to the thesis statement

Thesis: the overall claim of the paper

Using The Invisible-Visible Approach

This is a simple yet interesting way to compose introductions. Here is how it works:

1. Write sentences that state your intention. These are called invisible because they are hidden from your readers.
2. Write sentences that correspond to your intent. These are called visible because they are read by your audience.

INVISIBLE SENTENCES – STATE YOUR INTENT	VISIBLE SENTENCES – WRITE YOUR ACTUAL CONTENT
In my first sentence, I want to shock my readers by providing an interesting statistic about my topic.	Only 20% of interior designers are currently using AutoCAD for modeling design projects in Tokyo!
In the second sentence, I want to explain the statistic.	This is because interior designers in Tokyo are using newly developed software called “Build It.”
In the third sentence, I want to tell my readers about the advantages of using Build It.	Build It, launched in 2019 by a Tokyo-based private company, offers innovative modeling techniques and unprecedented rendering quality.
In the fourth sentence, I want a smooth transition to my thesis.	While the features of “Build It” look promising, designers are still experimenting and looking for feedback from designers around the world.
In the fifth sentence, I want to state my main argument or thesis.	The Interior Design department at VCUarts Qatar should consider purchasing the software.

INVISIBLE PARAGRAPH	VISIBLE PARAGRAPH
<p>In my first sentence, I want to shock my readers by providing an interesting statistic about my topic. In the second sentence, I want to explain the statistic. In the third sentence, I want to tell my readers about the advantages of using Build It. In the fourth sentence, I want a smooth transition to my thesis. In the fifth sentence, I want to state my main argument or thesis.</p>	<p>Only 20% of interior designers are currently using AutoCAD for modeling design projects in Tokyo! This is because interior designers in Tokyo are using newly developed software called “Build It.” Build It, launched in 2019 by a Tokyo-based private company, offers innovative modeling techniques and unprecedented rendering quality. While the features of Build It looks promising, designers are still experimenting and looking for feedback from designers around the world. The Interior Design department at VCUarts Qatar should consider purchasing the software.</p>



Tips For Writing Effective Introductions:

1. **Start by thinking about the question (or questions) you are trying to answer.** Your entire essay will be a response to this question, and your introduction is the first step toward that end. Your direct answer to the assigned question will be your thesis, and your thesis will likely be included in your introduction, so it is a good idea to use the question as a jumping-off point.
2. **Don't waste time in composing a perfect introduction before writing the body.** Some students cannot begin writing the body of the essay until they feel they have the perfect introduction. Be aware of the dangers of sinking too much time into the introduction. Some of that time can be more usefully channeled into planning and writing.
3. **It is fine to leave the writing of the introduction for a later stage in the essay-writing process.** You may think that you have to write your introduction first, but that isn't necessarily true, and it isn't always the most effective way to craft a good introduction. You may find that you don't know precisely what you are going to argue at the beginning of the writing process. It is perfectly fine to start out thinking that you want to argue a particular point but wind up arguing something slightly or even dramatically different by the time you've written most of the paper. The writing process can be an important way to organize your ideas, think through complicated issues, refine your thoughts, and develop a sophisticated argument.
4. **Don't be afraid to write a tentative introduction first and then change it later.** Some people find that they need to write some kind of introduction in order to get the writing process started. That's fine, but if you are one of those people, be sure to return to your initial introduction later and rewrite if necessary.
5. **Get to the point as soon as possible.** Generally, you want to raise your topic in your very first sentences. A common error is to begin too broadly or too far off-topic. Avoid sweeping generalizations

Sources:

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"Introductions and Conclusions", Writing Advice, University of Toronto.

The Everyday Writer by Andrea A. Lunsford.

The Writer's Handbook, The Writing Center, The U

