Introductions

What is an Introduction?
An introduction is the first paragraph in a paper, and it provides the exigence or purpose for the paper to be written. Introductions also house the thesis statement, which is usually the final sentence in the introduction. Occasionally, a thesis statement may exceed one sentence or appear in another location, but one-sentence thesis statements at the end of the introduction are appropriate for most assignments.

Guidelines for Introductions:

- There is not a single formula for introductions, but they will generally provide
  1. a context for writing the paper,
  2. an explanation of a problem, issue, or topic, and
  3. a claim/thesis that makes an argument about that problem, issue, or topic.

  Introductions may also include
  - examples,
  - definitions,
  - causes/effects,
  - comparison/contrast,
  - questions,
  - narratives or anecdotes

  The type of introduction needed will vary by discipline, assignment, and audience.

- Remember that introductions are similar to other types of paragraphs in that they should begin with a topic sentence and end with a concluding sentence that also transitions to the next paragraph.
  - In the case of an introduction, the thesis will usually be the concluding sentence, not only transitioning to the first body paragraph but also anticipating the rest of the paper.

- Intro paragraphs should move from less specific to more specific information, but they should not begin with an overly broad statement or resounding banality.
  - Intro paragraphs that begin with phrases like “Since the beginning of time,” for example, are likely too broad in scope. If your paper focuses on a specific text, event, topic, or person, the first sentence should likely reference that entity directly. The rest of the intro will build to a specific argument or claim about that text, event, topic, or person.

- The sentences preceding the thesis should not introduce details or information that are not related to the thesis or the rest of the paper.
  - All sentences in the introduction should build logically on one another and culminate in the thesis statement.

- In general, the introduction should not contain support. Occasionally, introductions may benefit from the inclusion of a quotation or other form of evidence; however, it is usually more effective to relegate evidence to a body paragraph where it can be fully explicated in order to support a specific aspect of the thesis. After all, you cannot support a claim until you have stated the claim.