

## 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.