

Crafting a Strong Introduction Paragraph

An introduction is important for demonstrating the main idea of your paper, getting your reader's attention, and putting the topic into context for your reader; however, don't feel pressured to write your introduction first! It may be more beneficial to get your body paragraphs organized and well-constructed first, and then write the introduction once your main points are clear. Whether you write your intro paragraph first or last, it should be concise and to the point by giving readers just the context and main points.

Parts of a Well-Constructed Introduction

<p>Opening Sometimes referred to as a "hook," the opening gives the reader their first impression and is meant to catch their attention. Some ideas for a good opening would be an anecdote or short story, an interesting but relevant quotation, question, or surprising fact to provoke your reader's interest. Not all of these will be appropriate for every paper. Choose one that works for you, and avoid being dramatic, overly obvious, or irrelevant.</p>	<p>Example using a fact: "Bananas contain alarming levels of pesticides, say leading scientists (Citation). What are the side effects of consumers ingesting these chemicals?"</p>
<p>Background Information This section should give your reader enough information to understand your thesis. It's a foundation for the rest of your paper. It should include information such as important names, dates, events, different sides of a debate, definitions of terms, and/or why the topic is relevant. Depending on the paper, you may need more or less background information. The key is to make sure you aren't giving too much away. Leave your examples and details for the body of your essay.</p>	<p>TIP: Look at each sentence and ask yourself "Is this necessary for understanding my thesis and overall paper?"</p>
<p>Thesis The thesis is the most important part of your introduction. It is a sentence or sentences that contain the results of your research, your main topic, or your argument in a condensed form at the end of your introduction. It's 1-3 sentences and should include your paper's main topic, main arguments or explain the main ideas about your topic, and optionally present a road map for the rest of your paper.</p>	<p>For more details, check out the "Writing a Strong Thesis Statement" handout available at CLAS and meet with a writing tutor to review your work.</p>

Let's write down some ideas!

1. What opening style will you use? What ideas do you have for how you will use it?

2. What information do you need to provide for the reader to understand your thesis?

3. Write out a rough idea for your thesis (use the thesis handout if you're unsure).

Now it's your turn! Turn your ideas into a rough draft in the box below.

Introduction Paragraph Checklist

Does your Intro Paragraph do the following?

- Clearly state the main topic
- Provide essential background information needed to understand the thesis
- State the purpose of the paper
- State your perspective on the topic (if required) or the general perspective of the paper
- Give a layout of what the reader will find in the paper
- Contain a clear and concise thesis statement