

Mini Lesson on the Introduction Paragraph

Definition: The introduction is the broad statement that starts the reading and answers three important questions:

- What is this paper about?
- Why are **you** writing this paper (what is the **purpose**)?
- What do you want to communicate?

You should answer these **questions** by doing the following:

- *Set the context* – provide general information about the main idea, explaining the situation so the reader can make sense of the topic and the claims that you make and support.
- *State why the main idea is important* – tell the reader why he or she should keep reading. Your goal is to create a clear, compelling, and convincing essay that people will want to read or act upon.
- *State your thesis/claim* – compose a sentence or two stating the position you will support.

A good opening sentence is **key**. To appeal to the reader's interest, try opening with an appealing story, quotation, question or example to get their attention. This is the **hook** of your essay. Note that you should mention only things that are going to be discussed in the essay, so don't start with a story that's unrelated.

- Things to **remember** when writing an intro: **1.** Give a good impression **2.** Make it interesting **3.** It should be organized **4.** Tell the reader what you're going to talk about.
- Things to **avoid** when writing an intro: **1.** Avoid going into detail **2.** Avoid using evidence or arguments **3.** Avoid writing a vague introduction

Example for an essay about traveling:

Visiting different countries is an activity enjoyed by many. Being away from home, work or college, and having new experiences in other countries is like living in someone else's shoes. Traveling around the world is a good way to be immersed in different cultures, meet new people and broaden your knowledge.

Exercise: Go back to your essay and examine your introduction. Does it attract the reader's attention? Is it related with your essay?

Mini Lesson on Topic Sentences

Definition:

A topic sentence organizes a paragraph, so it should be included in every body paragraph of your essay, usually at the beginning. They act like thesis statements by unifying each paragraph. The topic sentence makes a point that is part of the thesis statement and should be proven and supported with examples within the paragraph.

Example of topic sentences for an essay about a poem:

1. The first stanza introduces us to the setting, which is entirely a symbol of the hollow feelings that took hold of the speaker in that moment.
2. After the acute description of the time and place, the narrator goes on to the actions of the event. The second stanza gives us the impression that the speaker's beloved was ending their relationship without any real, strong reason.
3. The final paragraph is much like a conclusion of the thoughts expressed before.

The writer chose to write the first paragraph about the first stanza of the poem, which is clearly stated in the topic sentence, which also includes what the first stanza is about and what the writer will explain in the paragraph. The second one includes a transition sentence before the topic sentence, which comes just after. The third paragraph is about the third stanza. Just like in the first topic sentence, these last two also state the stanza that is going to be explained and what that stanza is about.

Exercise: Write a topic sentence for each body paragraph in your essay using the above examples as a guide. Make sure to include what the paragraph will be about.