

Research Paper Introduction Paragraph

A decorative graphic consisting of a solid teal horizontal bar that spans the width of the slide. Below this bar, on the right side, are several horizontal lines of varying lengths and colors, including teal and white, creating a layered, stepped effect.

What goes in the Introduction?

- **Attention Getter**—grab the readers' attention
- **Thesis Statement**—the one sentence that focuses your entire paper
- **Preview**—let the reader know what the topics of the body paragraphs are

Attention Getters

- **Question**
- Think of a question or two that requires reflective thinking on the part of the reader.
- Here's a sample about Dunkirk:

What should citizens be expected to do for their country? Should citizens risk their lives to save soldiers? Ordinary British citizens risked everything to save soldiers in 1940.

Attention Getters

- **Quote**
- Find a quote that fits in with your topic, or a quote by a person that is important to your topic.
- Here's a sample about Dunkirk:

British Prime Minister Winston Churchill called the rescue at Dunkirk “a miracle of deliverance.”

Attention Getters

- **Statistic**
- Use a statistic that helps make a point, or a statistic that is unexpected or shocking, to get the reader's attention.
- Here's a sample about Dunkirk:

Over 338,000 Allied troops were evacuated from the French port of Dunkirk and delivered safely to England thanks to the efforts of everyday British citizens.

Attention Getters

- **Little-known Fact**
- Surprise the reader with a little-known fact about your topic. It may make the reader want to know more about the topic.
- Here's a sample about Dunkirk:

Everyday British citizens were the heroes in 1940 when they manned their own small boats and set sail into a war zone to help evacuate Allied troops at Dunkirk.

Attention Getters

- **Fragments**
- Use a series of sentence fragments to focus the reader's attention on images or key words you want them to think about.
- Here's a sample about Dunkirk:
Patriotism. Courage. Perseverance. These are the traits shown by everyday British citizens who helped save Allied troops at Dunkirk.

Attention Getters

- **Set the Scene**
- Describe the setting or action for your topic.
- Here's a sample about Dunkirk:

Dunkirk used to be a beach vacation destination. Now, long lines of tired, defeated soldiers snake back and forth across the beaches. Smoke billows around them as German fighters and bombers strafe the patiently waiting troops. This is Dunkirk, 1940.

Attention Getters

- **Metaphor**
- Make a comparison between your topic and something with similar qualities.
- Here's a sample about Dunkirk:
British citizens threw a life preserver to over 300,000 British troops stuck on the coast of France.

Attention Getters

- **Definition**
- State a definition in your own words that ties to your topic.
- Here's a sample about Dunkirk:

Miracle: an occurrence that is unbelievable; something that has no logical explanation.

Now YOU do it!

Try three different attention getter techniques for your research paper on the handout. Circle the one you think will be best for your paper.

Begin writing your introduction paragraph. Attention Getter first, then the Thesis Statement (you should have already written this), and then (if needed) a preview of what is in your paper.

This is my introduction paragraph for Dunkirk...

Miracle at Dunkirk

Miracle: an occurrence that is unbelievable; something that has no logical explanation. In 1940, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill called the events at the port of Dunkirk in northern France “a miracle of deliverance” (Knowles). **The Miracle of Dunkirk was the rescue of 338,226 British, French, and Belgian troops with the help of ordinary British citizens, which ensured that over 300,000 Allied troops would be saved to fight again later in World War II.** The British army was in retreat, British citizens answered their country’s call for help, and thousands of troops escaped to fight again.

BLUE = Attention Getter

RED = Thesis Statement

PURPLE = Preview—What I’ll be telling you about in the paper