Tips for Writing Introductions

Your introduction is like a road map to the rest of your essay. By the time your audience is finished reading it, they should be able to identify the central argument or idea, the main points you will be discussing and the conclusion your paper is likely to reach. Your introduction introduces the general topic of your essay as well as your specific thesis. A good introduction will have a hook that will grab the reader's attention. All introductions must have a thesis to be complete. The introduction will also set the tone of your essay (e.g. critical, humorous). Choose a hook that will help set this tone right away.

Good Ways to Hook Your Reader	Things to Avoid in Introductions
• Tell an anecdote (a short, humorous story) • Refer to some statistics • Ask a provocative question • Use a quotation • Use an analogy (compare your topic to something similar and more familiar to your audience) • Define an important term (in your own words, not the dictionary's) • Provide some historical background information • Make a concession, but only if your thesis makes it clear how you will refute it	• Obvious statements (e.g. "In this essay, I will be writing about . . .) • Generalizations (e.g. "_____ is important for many reasons.") • Going off topic

Creating a Thesis

Your thesis statement is usually a one sentence statement that describes the main idea or claim of your essay. It usually comes at the end of the introductory paragraph.

Tips for a Strong Thesis	Things to Avoid in your Thesis
• Stay focused on the topic of your paper • Narrow down the topic, so you can properly address it in the number of words or paragraphs that you have been assigned • Make an argument, not a statement of fact • List your supporting points in the order you will discuss them in the body paragraphs • Be original and avoid clunky, obvious statements, like "In this essay, I will argue that . . ." • Phrase it positively (argue *for* something) rather than negatively (argue that something is *never* the case)	• Phrasing your thesis as a question • Being unclear or too general • Not taking a clear stance on the issue • Using examples that would be more effective in your body paragraphs • Going off topic