

WRITING AN INTRODUCTION

An effective introduction encourages the reader to read your essay with interest and prepares them to understand it better. In general, an effective introduction includes three key components:

- an opening** that captures the reader’s attention
- the background information or context** the reader will need to understand the topic and thesis
- a thesis statement** that expresses your position or comment on the topic.
 - The thesis statement or introduction may also map out how the writing will progress from paragraph to paragraph.

OPENING: Start your paper with a general statement about your topic that catches the reader’s attention (sometimes called a “hook”). Here is a list of things you might use to develop an interesting opening:

- a relevant quotation
- a question or example
- an anecdote or story
- a fascinating fact or definition
- a figure of speech or a vivid description
- the position opposing one you will take
- a dilemma that needs a solution

Ideas for your opening: _____

CONTEXT: Define the issue or problem and show why the topic matters. Provide the information and background the reader will need to understand your topic and position.

What are you writing about? _____

Why does it matter? _____

What else does the reader need to know about it? _____

THESIS STATEMENT: State your position on the topic and your reasons for believing it. You will support this position with evidence in your body paragraphs. (See “Developing a Thesis Statement” for more information.)

What are you saying about the topic and why do you believe it? _____

A few things to keep in mind:

- Always make sure that you carefully read and understand any assignment information or requirements from your instructor regarding your introduction and the paper as a whole. Some types of essays, like personal narratives, may not need an explicitly stated thesis.
- As you begin your first draft, you may want to skip the introduction and focus on the body of your paper. After your paper has taken shape, you can go back and sketch out the main ideas for your introduction.