

INTRODUCTIONS

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

The introduction and conclusion frame your essay. The introduction presents the purpose of the essay, and tells the reader what he or she is about to read.

The **introduction** to your essay has three main functions:

1. To catch the reader's **interest** and attention so that he or she will want to read more.
2. To tell the reader what **main idea** will be developed in the rest of the essay. This main idea is expressed in the **thesis statement**.
3. To set the **tone** for the essay, letting your reader know that you are knowledgeable.

A good introduction opens discussion of the subject in an engaging manner, beginning in a general way to familiarize the reader. The introduction should then become more specific as it defines the particular subject and scope of your position. Your introduction should then end with the specific focus of your thesis statement. It is like an inverted triangle,  starting broadly and narrowing down to a main point.

Things **NOT** to do in an introductory paragraph:

- Apologize. Never suggest you don't know what you are talking about or that you are not enough of an expert or that your opinion doesn't matter. Avoid, at all costs: "In my humble opinion..." "I'm not sure about this, but..."
- Announce your intentions. Do not flatly say what you are about to do in your essay: "In this paper, I will..." "The purpose of this paper is..." "My subject is..." This is dull and boring, and you want to capture your reader's attention, remember?
- Begin with a dictionary or encyclopedia definition: "According to Webster's Dictionary, a widget is..."
- Postpone, dilly dally, hem and haw. Get to it. Move with confidence into your essay. Many writers write a warm-up paragraph or two to sharpen or define their own ideas of what they are up to, and then they go back and delete the running start.

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LEARN MORE

Don't forget: students can always ask tutors or their teachers for an explanation of anything that's not clear.

Texts available to use in the SLC English Writing Lab:

<i>Grassroots with Readings</i> , Ninth Edition Susan Fawcett Chapter 5	<i>Evergreen, A Guide to Writing with Readings</i> , Ninth Edition, Susan Fawcett Chapter 15	<i>The Bedford Handbook</i> , Seventh Edition, Diana Hacker Pages 492-3
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Online:

[Introduction and Conclusion Tips](#)

[Writing Center: Introductions and Conclusions](#)

[Introductions](#)