



## Introductory Paragraphs

### GENERAL FORMAT FOR SINGLE-PARAGRAPH INTRODUCTIONS

If you are unsure of how to organize your introductory paragraph, this is a good format to follow:

1. Hook (be creative in capturing your audience's attention)
2. Background information (or statements that connect the hook to the thesis)
3. Thesis

### EXAMPLES OF DIFFERENT HOOKS

**Introduce the Controversy:** Sometimes it is best to situate yourself within the conversation surrounding your topic early on. By starting your paper with the controversy, you show the relevance of your topic and easily transition to your own thesis. Starting this way also allows you to introduce a literature review seamlessly.

**Controversy:** *Even in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, some people still believe that women do not belong in the workplace.*

**Personal Anecdote/Story:** Starting a paper with an interesting story (whether it is your own or someone else's that you researched) can be a fun and creative way to start a paper, as well as effective in getting your audience to care about your topic.

**Topic:** *Argue for universal healthcare.*

**Hook:** *Begin with a true story about someone who finds out they have cancer but cannot afford healthcare or the costs of treatment.*

**Quotation, Song Lyric, or Poem:** If you are going to begin with a quotation of some sort, make sure it strongly relates to your argument and is very interesting. Don't use a quotation if you could say the same thing with fewer words or in a more interesting way by summarizing.

**Quotation:** *Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. once said, "I say to you today, my friends, though, even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream. [...] I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character" (1963).*

**Unusual Fact or Statement:** Avoid very broad or bland statements. Instead, it can be very effective to begin with an unusual fact to get the audience to think about something in a different way.

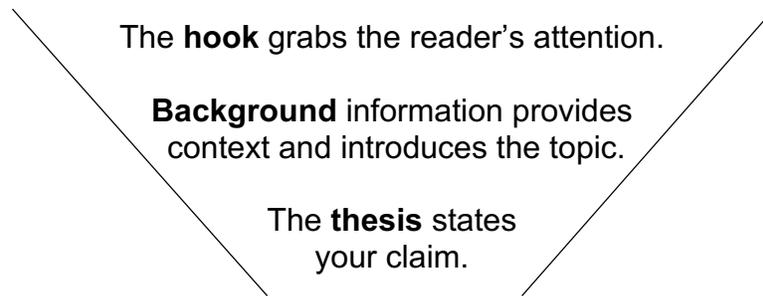
**Fact:** *There are more lifeforms living on a human's skin than there are people on Earth.*

## WHAT TO AVOID

- Very general, broad, or vague statements. It is okay to be specific and direct in the introduction; it actually makes your paper more interesting. Make sure your introduction doesn't just loosely pertain to your topic but strongly relates to and introduces your thesis.
- Overused statements: "In today's society..." "Since the beginning of time..."
- First-person statements: "In this paper I will..." "My paper will address..."

## ORGANIZING THE WHOLE PARAGRAPH

It can help to think of an introduction as a funnel.



When structuring your introduction this way, you might come up with something like this:

**Hook:** *Even in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, some people still believe that women do not belong in the workplace.*

**Background:** *In 2017, Politician Gerald Jones argued that family values have been lost in America, and he attributes the rise in juvenile delinquency to the absence of moral women in the household. Sociologist Henry Barnswell echoes this sentiment when he writes, "Children need a strong role model in the home, and none is more important than the mother" (2015). Yet, the vast majority of the population finds this stance to be antiquated, especially the 74.6 million women in the civilian labor force.*

**Thesis:** *Though it is true that the presence of parents impacts the behavior of America's youth, our country is stronger overall with women in the workplace, and the benefits to the women themselves outweigh any criticisms that opponents may have.*