

## Introductory Paragraphs

Many people feel that the introductory paragraph of an essay, (also known as the Introduction), is the most important paragraph of all. Certainly, it lets the reader know what to expect in terms of tone, style, purpose and theme. It's your essay's first impression—and you only get to make a first impression once!

Have you ever had a long conversation with someone where you become increasingly frustrated because the other person doesn't seem to have a POINT? You might even say, "Get to the point, man!" or "What are you trying to say?" An essay without an introduction feels the same way to a reader. An introductory paragraph prepares the reader for the rest of the essay by stating its overall theme or point.

An introductory paragraph has a slightly different structure from a P.I.E. paragraph. (P.I.E. paragraphs make up the body of the essay). To remember a general format for your introduction, think of the word: H.I.T.

**H = Hook** (the opening sentence that attracts the reader's attention)

**I = Information** (general information that leads the reader to your focus)

**T = Thesis Statement** (a sentence that contains the main idea or central theme of the whole essay).

### The Hook

There are many ways to attract a reader's attention, so allow yourself to be creative. You may find yourself coming back and re-writing the "hook" sentence of your essay after you've finished the essay as you think of more ideas. Many writers also leave the title to the last step, or change their title after they've finished writing.

Some students really agonize about writing that first sentence. You may want to choose one of the following options unless (or until) a better idea occurs.

1. Begin with a sentence that asks the reader to question him or herself.
2. Begin with a quote from a famous person or text.
3. Begin with an interesting fact or statistic
4. Begin with a contradiction that shocks the readers or sets them up for a surprise.
5. Begin with a general statement of opinion that leaves the reader questioning your point of view.
6. Begin with a very brief anecdote or story that contains the theme of your essay.
7. Begin with a personal revelation.

