



## WRITER'S STUDIO RESOURCES:



# INTRODUCTION PARAGRAPHS

### What is an introduction paragraph?

The introduction paragraph is the first paragraph of your paper which introduces your paper's topic to the readers.

### Why do I need an introduction paragraph?

The introduction paragraph lets readers know what to expect from the paper by engaging them with a summary and stating the thesis.

## The introduction paragraph should:

### Be Engaging

You want to grab the reader's attention and give them a reason to continue reading.

- Try one of the following to develop an engaging hook:
  - State the problem
  - Give an intriguing/shocking statement or statistic
  - Ask a rhetorical or thought-provoking question
  - Give an anecdote

### Summarize the Topic

Summarize the contents of the paper, highlighting the main arguments and providing a bit of background.

- In the summary:
  - Provide background information on the topic
  - Explain why the topic is important
  - Describe the complexity of the topic

### State the Thesis

Give the main argument of your paper.

- Your thesis should:
  - Be specific
  - Be debatable
  - Provide focus and organization for the paper  
(See our handout on thesis statements for more!)



**Pro Tip!** Don't feel pressured to write the introduction first. Most of the time, you don't know exactly what's going to be in the paper until you finish writing it.



# Crafting an Introduction

## What to avoid in the introduction paragraph:

### Being too Broad/Narrow

You want to be specific for your paper, but don't be so narrow as to limit yourself to only a few discussion points.

### Using Dictionary Definitions

While defining terms throughout the paper can be useful, avoid doing so in the introduction paragraph as it causes readers to lose interest because it has a less dramatic impact on the writing.

### Using Quotations or Paraphrasing

It's better to stay away from quotations and paraphrasing in the introduction paragraph—this is what your body paragraphs are for. Often times, these quotes and paraphrases are cliché.

### Giving Obvious Facts/Statistics

If they are shocking, unusual, interesting, or typically held ideas, then it's appropriate to include them. Otherwise, it sounds like a book report and readers lose interest.

Let's take a look at an example:

Notice how the paragraph begins with an interesting statement to engage readers.

*Storytelling has been a tradition among humans for as long as, well, there have been humans. Predating even language, early humans told stories through drawings and even, some believe, a form of primitive sign language. **Once language was developed, oral storytelling became the main form of history and tradition preservation. Stories were told by parents and grandparents to the newest generations of their families, and those generations would then tell the same stories to even newer generations after they grew older. This is a tradition that is still prevalent today, even after writing became a dominant form of recording history. Oral storytelling has shifted in style as we progress, moving into recorded audio forms, as well as becoming a form of written storytelling preserved and recorded through social media. Despite the shifting in ways that storytelling is told, oral storytelling is an important part of our everyday culture, and the uniqueness that makes up the oral story is one that will survive, even in this digital age.***

The paragraph wraps up with the thesis, which states the author's main arguments.

Here, there is a summary of the main topic, giving a brief history as well as the current issues surrounding the topic.