

Five Approaches to Attention-Getting Introductions

To grab the reader's attention in the introduction of the five paragraph essay, try some of the following techniques:

- **1 Start with an analogy.**

Pounding. Forever pounding upon the anvil is the hammer. The clash of steel and iron as they meet on the cold, rusty anvil permeates the air and echoes through it. All the while, the sturdy, resilient anvil provides the support needed to withstand the blows of the hammer. It is forever the broad base to be bashed and smashed to make the iron stronger and to give the hammer strength in return. In *Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens the lower class of nineteenth-century England is the anvil; the upper class is the hammer. Through his portrait of the social classes, Dickens illustrates that social rank causes people to act foolishly, misjudge character, and lose themselves in order to conform to society's expectations. --*Cassidy Quilty*

- **2 Ask a question.**

How many times have you told to remove your lazy derriere from the computer and exercise instead? The truth is computers are a huge part of everybody's life. From business offices to your own living room, computers are everywhere. In contemporary society, people must be computer literate to survive. Used to type documents, access the Internet, and communicate, the computer has become a necessity in today's new world. --*Stephanie Povirk*

- **3 Use a quotation.**

"To err is human, to forgive is divine." Alexander Pope's words are relevant in contemporary society and in *Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens. In both worlds, the collective society forgets that all humans make mistakes and deserve forgiveness. Dickens echoes this theme by openly mocking society for its inability to forgive Magwitch for his crimes and to allow him once again to live a new life. Throughout the course of the novel Pip, the protagonist, learns about man's inhumanity to man. He discovers that many innocent people are punished unfairly, that many horrible people are considered to be respectable, and that jails do not denote the inner worth of a person. --*Cole Pierce*

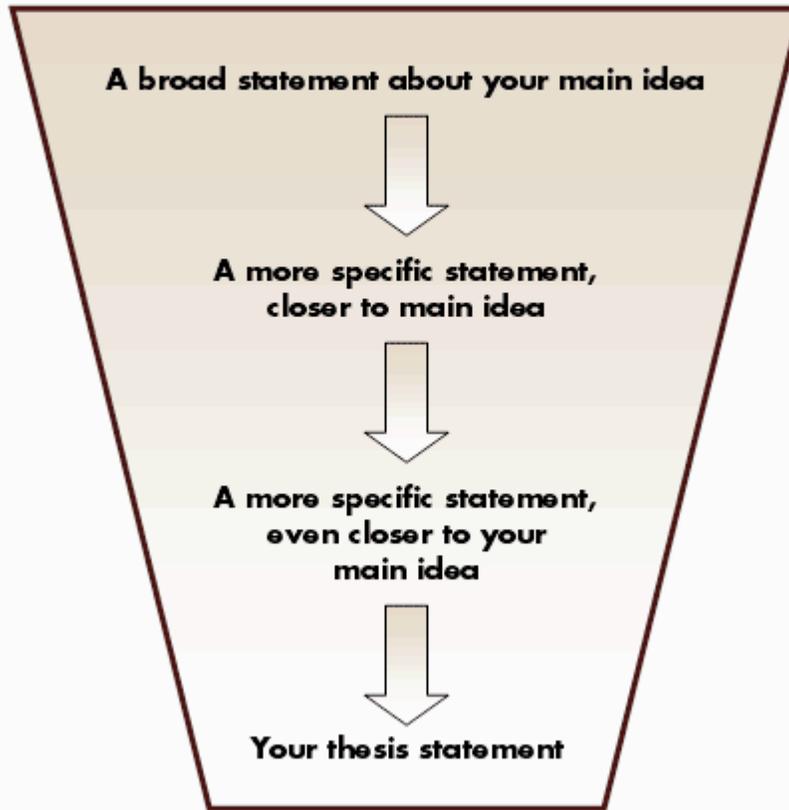
- **4 Begin with an enticing sensory description of the setting.**

Freshly cut grass. Blooming tulips. Warming temperatures. Sprintime had arrived. Our lunchtime chatter remained the same, brimming with gossip of boys, classes, and get-togethers. But on that fateful morning, our lunch table buzzed with the excitement of the upcoming softball season. --*Cassie Leighton*

- **5 Create an interesting simile.**

Growth without experience is like a bridge without support. In *Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens, the protagonist Pip struggles to bridge the gap between the lower and upper classes as he strives to attain higher social status. Dickens illustrates that true growth can only happen in stages. Thus, as Pip's expectations shatter, he discovers his internal weaknesses, removes his blinders, and becomes a true gentleman. --*Mark Rossborough*

Developing an Introduction: The Top-Down Model



What is an introduction?

An introduction is the first paragraph (or paragraphs) of any written work.

What is the function of an introduction?

An introduction

- captures your audience's attention.
 - gives background on your topic.
 - develops interest in your topic.
 - guides your reader to your [thesis](#).
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How can I write an introduction?

There are three basic ways to write an introduction:

1. You can write the introduction after you write the body of your essay.
2. You can write the introduction before you write the body of your essay.
3. You can rough out the introduction first and then focus and revise it once you have written your essay.

Many people write a rough draft and from that find out what their purpose really is and what they really believe. Then they revise the focus, language, or order of their introduction. This sequence -- of drafting an introduction and then revising and refining it once the body of the paper is sketched out -- is *very* common.

None of the above situations is better!

What goes on in an introduction?

There is no single right form for an introduction to take, but one common form that many writers use is the following:

- The introduction begins with a broad statement about the main idea. This statement might suggest background or the general category to which the thesis idea belongs.
 - The next sentences are more specific, moving closer to the actual thesis of the essay.
 - The final sentence of an introduction often contains a fairly specific version of the main idea; it is the [thesis statement](#).
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Do all introductions have four sentences?

No, introductions can have a very few to many sentences, or even be more than one paragraph in length, depending on the length of your essay. In short, the actual number of sentences in an introduction is not important.

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LEO: Literacy Education Online

Strategies for Writing a Conclusion

Strategies for Writing a Conclusion

Conclusions are often the most difficult part of an essay to write, and many writers feel that they have nothing left to say after having written the paper. A writer needs to keep in mind that the conclusion is often what a reader remembers best. Your conclusion should be the best part of your paper.

A conclusion should

- stress the importance of the thesis statement,
- give the essay a sense of completeness, and
- leave a final impression on the reader.

Suggestions

- **Answer the question "So What?"**

Show your readers why this paper was important. Show them that your paper was meaningful and useful.

- **Synthesize, don't summarize**
 - Don't simply repeat things that were in your paper. They have read it. Show them how the points you made and the support and examples you used were not random, but fit together.
- **Redirect your readers**
 - Give your reader something to think about, perhaps a way to use your paper in the "real" world. If your introduction went from general to specific, make your conclusion go from specific to general. Think globally.
- **Create a new meaning**
 - You don't have to give new information to create a new meaning. By demonstrating how your ideas work together, you can create a new picture. Often the sum of the paper is worth more than its parts.

Strategies

- **Echoing the introduction:** Echoing your introduction can be a good strategy if it is meant to bring the reader full-circle. If you begin by describing a scenario, you can end with the same scenario as proof that your essay was helpful in creating a new understanding.

Example

Introduction

From the parking lot, I could see the towers of the castle of the Magic Kingdom standing stately against the blue sky. To the right, the tall peak of The Matterhorn rose even higher. From the left, I could hear the jungle sounds of Adventureland. As I entered the gate, Main Street stretched before me with its quaint shops evoking an old-fashioned small town so charming it could never have existed. I was entranced. Disneyland may have been built for children, but it brings out the child in adults.

Conclusion

I thought I would spend a few hours at Disneyland, but here I was at 1:00 A.M., closing time, leaving the front gates with the now dark towers of the Magic Kingdom behind me. I could see tired children, toddling along and struggling to keep their eyes open as best they could. Others slept in their parents' arms as we waited for the parking lot tram that would take us to our cars. My forty-year-old feet ached, and I felt a bit sad to think that in a couple of days I would be leaving California, my vacation over, to go back to my desk. But then I smiled to think that for at least a day I felt ten years old again.

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- **Challenging the reader:** By issuing a challenge to your readers, you are helping them to redirect the information in the paper, and they may apply it to their own lives.

Example

Though serving on a jury is not only a civic responsibility but also an interesting experience, many people still view jury duty as a chore that interrupts their jobs and the routine of their daily lives. However, juries are part of America's attempt to be a free and just society. Thus, jury duty challenges us to be interested and responsible citizens.

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- **Looking to the future:** Looking to the future can emphasize the importance of your paper or redirect the readers' thought process. It may help them apply the new information to their lives or see things more globally.

Example

Without well-qualified teachers, schools are little more than buildings and equipment. If higher-paying careers continue to attract the best and the brightest students, there will not only be a shortage of teachers, but the teachers available may not have the best qualifications. Our youth will suffer. And when youth suffers, the future suffers.

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- **Posing questions:** Posing questions, either to your readers or in general, may help your readers gain a new perspective on the topic, which they may not have held before reading your conclusion. It may also bring your main ideas together to create a new meaning.

Example

Campaign advertisements should help us understand the candidate's qualifications and positions on the issues. Instead, most tell us what a boob or knave the opposing candidate is, or they present general images of the candidate as a family person or God-fearing American. Do such advertisements contribute to creating an informed electorate or a people who choose political leaders the same way they choose soft drinks and soap?

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For questions and suggestions, please e-mail us at leolink@stcloudstate.edu.

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