

The Introduction Paragraph

Writing



ENGLISH FOR ACADEMIC SUPPORT

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POINTS TO CONSIDER

Introduces essay topic with thesis statement

Builds a thorough structure

Engages interest

Encourages discussion

Provides essential context

Corresponds with essay topic sentences

Opening Statements Options

- 1) General to specific shift
- 2) Provide historical background
- 3) Provide a definition
- 4) Discuss counterargument
- 5) Find a startling statistic illustrating the problem
- 6) Quote (and introduce) an expert
- 7) Combination of approaches

COMMON OPENING STATEMENT ERRORS

- **Avoid dictionary definitions, especially of words your audience already knows.**
- **Avoid repeating the assignment specifications using the professor's wording.**
- **Avoid details and in-depth explanations intended for essay body.**

TIPS

- Do not spend a lot of time writing the introduction at the start of your essay.
- Be open to developing the introduction as you progress through the essay.
- Be accepting of finalizing your introduction for a later stage.
- Do not begin too broadly or too far off topic.
- Be aware of length variations.

Introduction Components

- 1) Opening Statements
 - Choose the best approach to begin the introduction based on the topic, prompt, and/or purpose
- 2) Thesis Statement
 - Introduces the writer's perspective
 - Responds to the question/prompt
 - Consists of two parts: main idea and controlling idea
 - Can be direct or indirect
 - Usually located in the last part of the introduction paragraph
 - Can provide the organization pattern

Thesis Statement

Includes two components:

- (1) main idea of the essay
 - usually matches the provided question/prompt
- (2) focus/controlling idea of the essay
 - usually seen as the response to the question/prompt
 - usually match the main body paragraphs in the essay
 - controlled by the writer's plan

Two Types of Thesis Statements:

- (1) Simple Thesis Statement
 - contains the two components
 - acceptable for short essay

Example:

Nations face problems requiring immediate action.

- (2) Expanded Thesis Statement
 - provides discussion of controlling ideas
 - points to be discussed in the essay are provided

Examples:

Three important problems are facing the nation that require immediate attention.

The main problems facing this nation are a lack of job opportunities for citizens, government corruption, and limited university programs for poor students.

*Be sure to confirm thesis statement guidelines in your course.

SOURCES

Douglas, S. (2018). *Academic Inquiry 4: Essays and Research*. (2nd Ed.) Don Mills: Oxford University Press.

Engkent, L. (2011). *Skill Set: Strategies for Reading and Writing in the Canadian Classroom* (2nd ed.). Don Mills: Oxford University Press.

Henderson, E., & Moran, K. M. (2014). *Essay Basics*. In *The empowered writer: Writing, reading & research* (Second Edition, pp. 112–125). Oxford University Press.

Norton, S., Green, B., & Dynes, R. (2016). *Essay Essentials with Readings* (6th ed.) Toronto: Nelson Education Ltd.

Slaght, P., Harben, P., & Pallant, A. (2009). *Reading & Writing: Course Book*. Reading: Garnet Education.



COMMON THESIS STATEMENT ERRORS

- **WRITTEN AS A QUESTION**
What are the benefits of studying archaeology?
- **TOPIC IS BROAD OR TOO GENERAL**
Studying archaeology is important.
- **SIMPLE STATEMENT OF FACT**
Memorial University has an archaeology program.
- **USES AN ANNOUNCEMENT STYLE APPROACH**
This essay will discuss the benefits of studying archaeology.

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Please review the Writing Centre handouts discussing the conclusion, body paragraphs, and topic sentences to support the introduction handout.

