The Introduction Paragraph
Writing
ENGLISH FOR ACADEMIC SUPPORT

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

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

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.

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.

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.*

**SOURCES**


Contact us
Writing Centre SN-2054
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709-864-3168
Please review the Writing Centre handouts discussing the conclusion, body paragraphs, and topic sentences to support the introduction handout.