

Writing an introduction

DIRECTIONS: Now that you are familiar with the basics of plagiarism, using citations, and formatting your work, it is time to begin writing your introductory paragraph. For many, writing an introduction can be a challenge. Follow these simple steps to create an attention-grabbing introduction.

Your introduction should prepare readers for your essay by giving them the information they need to follow your discussion. For this reason, your introduction should include a thesis statement that presents the main idea of your essay, which usually appears at the end of the introductory paragraph.

Here are some ways to begin your introduction:

- _____ Begin with a general statement to introduce your topic.
- _____ Begin with a contradiction: start with a statement recognizing an opinion or approach that is opposite from the one you plan to take in your essay.
- _____ Begin with a short anecdote or narrative: if your story is interesting, it will draw readers in immediately. ***This is NOT a story about your own life... This is something from a news article or a well known event. REMEMBER: using first person is not an option for this essay.
- _____ Begin with an interesting fact or statistic: make sure this is powerful, as you will be including factual information in your essay.
- _____ Begin with a definition of a term that is important to your essay. You can either use a literal, dictionary definition or you can create your own definition based on the information you have researched.

Use the following checklist as you complete your introduction:

_____ 1. **A Powerful Beginning:** Begin with something that will catch your reader's attention (without confusing him/her). Your audience should be hooked at this point—they should want to continue reading.

_____ 2. **Purpose:** Make it evident that your essay is to inform the audience of your topic. Why should they care about your topic?

_____ 3. **Scope:** Briefly discuss the components you plan to discuss in your paper.

_____ 4. **Background Information:** Pretend as though the audience is not familiar with any aspect of your topic. What information is absolutely essential for them to know prior to reading the rest of your essay?

_____ 5. State your **thesis statement** or main purpose for writing your essay.

Writing your body paragraphs

Each of your body paragraphs should be formatted using the guidelines below:

- 7-10 sentences
- 1st sentence must be a topic sentence stating what the paragraph is about.
 - **NOT OKAY:** “This paragraph will be about kinesthetic learners.”
 - **OKAY:** “Students who prefer a more hands-on, interactive approach to learning are considered kinesthetic learners.”
- Sentences 2-4 should cover basic information about your topic. Look at your outline for information.
- Sentences 4-5 provide evidence from the text to support the above claims. **USE TRANSITION STATEMENTS**. → Research shows, Studies prove, It is evident that, etc...
**Don't forget to use in-text citations!
- Sentences 6-7 **EXPLAIN** the significance of the quotes that were used.
- Sentences 8-9 conclude the paragraph and transition into the next.
- You will have a body paragraph for each direct subtopic in your outline.

Body Paragraph Example:

Students who prefer a more hands-on, interactive approach to learning are considered kinesthetic learners. Formally, a kinesthetic learner can be defined as, “a learning style that requires a student to manipulate or touch material to learn. Kinesthetic-tactile techniques are used in combination with visual and/or auditory study techniques, producing multi-sensory learning” (Houghton). Furthermore, it is apparent to educators that this style of learner cannot learn as well by simply listening to a lecture or watching a demonstration; instead, the student prefers to be actively engaged and to learn by doing the task themselves. Typically, activities such as group work, drama presentation, recreational games, and project-based assessments will peak a kinesthetic learner’s interest (Farwell). In a recent study conducted by Jarred Prince, it was discovered that on average, 30% of students are considered kinesthetic learners (Prince). Knowing this, teachers are able to develop a variety of interactive lesson plans that will allow kinesthetic learners to express their creativity by performing the task at hand. Ultimately, this style of learning is most successful when the student and the teacher both understand that in order to sustain their attention; the activities must reach the student on a more tactile level.

TRANSITION STATEMENTS

Using transition statements that sound professional and intelligent will
add credibility to your work.

Here's a list of transition statements:

- ✓ First, second, third...
- ✓ Not only _____, but also _____
 - ✓ Research shows...
 - ✓ Studies prove...
 - ✓ It is evident that...
 - ✓ In addition...
 - ✓ Furthermore...
 - ✓ Moreover...
 - ✓ Comparatively...
 - ✓ Equally important...
 - ✓ To conclude...
 - ✓ As previously stated...
 - ✓ To summarize...
 - ✓ Overall...
 - ✓ Given these points...
 - ✓ For example...
 - ✓ For instance...
 - ✓ Ultimately...
- ✓ _____ (author's name) states...
 - ✓ Therefore...
 - ✓ However...
 - ✓ Unfortunately...
 - ✓ Fortunately...
- ✓ Other _____

Writing your conclusion

DIRECTIONS: Use the following guidelines to write the concluding paragraph of your essay. The purpose of your conclusion is to reflect on what you've researched, summarize the main points, and focus on three/four specific points you want your audience to take with them.

Your conclusion should:

- ✓ Be 6-8 sentences
- ✓ Include a brief summary of your essay's main points
- ✓ NOT include any NEW information (should all be reflection on what has already been stated)
- ✓ Focus on three of the MAIN points of your essay. Ask yourself what you want your readers to take with them. What are the overarching themes of your essay?
 - ✓ Restate the main idea of your essay, or your thesis statement