

Introductions

So you've decided on a topic, and now you're ready to start your introduction. That's good! Many times picking a topic can be the hardest part, so that's one hurdle you've already cleared. When it comes to actually starting to write though, introductions are tricky, especially when your ideas still aren't fully formulated yet. Hopefully, this handout can help with that!

The first thing we need to consider is how to grab our reader's attention.

This is handy as it provides a quick way to get them invested in what we are talking about. After all, your reader will pay more attention to what we're trying to say if they're genuinely interested, right? Some simple ways to do this are rhetorical questions, correcting a misconception, or just talking about what you personally find interesting about the topic. A lot of times this is easier said than done, which is why it's probably a good time to mention another idea, something called the "General to Specific Pattern". Put in simple terms, we want to start our intro with more broad observations, and end with a specific claim. Think of an upside-down pyramid. We'll come back to that specific claim later, but for now just remember that your hook doesn't need to be specific to your paper, it just needs to be something within the broad sense of your ideas.

After we write our hook, we need to begin the transition from our general observations, to our more specific claim. Right now, we are in the middle section of our upside-down pyramid. This part doesn't have to be too long, we just need a sentence or two here. We essentially want to describe your topic. For example, if you're writing about a book, this is likely where you would introduce the book and the author, as well as the specific topic within the book that you will be writing about.

Finally, we're at the tip of our pyramid. This is where we need to write our argument, otherwise known as our thesis. When laying out our thesis, there are some things we need first. In addition to the main claim we will be arguing for, we need our supporting claims that we will use to support our argument as well. These can range from identifying and interpreting figurative language, to analyzing visual techniques in a work of art. These points are why you believe your main claim is correct. A good simple thesis format is "Due to x, y, and z, C", where x, y, and z are your supporting arguments, and C is your main claim. This helps you lay out your thoughts, but also lets your reader see where your paper is going to go. Take a look at the example below.

C: Waffles are superior to pancakes

x: Waffles hold toppings more effectively

y: Waffles cook more evenly

z: Waffles maintain a crispy texture longer

Thesis: "Due to waffles holding toppings more effectively, cooking more evenly, and maintaining a crispy texture longer, waffles are superior to pancakes."

And that's it! Your intro is done, and you can continue to write the rest of your paper. If you're still having trouble, make an appointment with the Writing Center; we'll be happy to help you!