

The Introduction

The introductory paragraph introduces the argument of your paper. A well-constructed introductory paragraph immediately captures the interest of your reader and gives appropriate background information about the paper's topic.

The most important function of your paper's introductory paragraph, however, is to present a clear statement of your paper's argument. This sentence is your paper's thesis. Without a thesis, it is impossible for you to present an effective argument.

Three Steps to an Introduction

1. Get the reader's attention by using a "hook."
2. Give some background information if necessary.
3. Write a thesis statement.

The Hook

The introduction has a "hook or grabber" to catch the reader's attention. Some "grabbers" include:

1. Opening with an unusual detail: (Manitoba, because of its cold climate, is not thought of as a great place to be a reptile. Actually, it has the largest seasonal congregation of garter snakes in the world!)
2. Opening with a strong statement: (Cigarettes are the number one cause of lighter sales in Canada!)
3. Opening with a Quotation: (Elbert Hubbard once said , "Truth is stronger than fiction.")
4. Opening with an Anecdote: An anecdote can provide an amusing and attention-getting opening if it is short and to the point.
5. Opening with a Statistic or Fact: Sometimes a statistic or fact will add emphasis or interest to your topic. It may be wise to include the item's authoritative source.
6. Opening with a Question. (Have you ever considered how many books we'd read if it were not for television?)
7. Opening with an Exaggeration or Outrageous Statement. (The whole world watched as the comet flew overhead.)