

Introduction

Your introductory paragraph is the most important paragraph in your essay because it is the first impression the reader gets of your assignment. The introduction accomplishes two things: First, it gives the reader a sense of your topic and your approach to that topic, which is why your thesis statement is always in your introductory paragraph. Second, an effective introduction makes your reader interested in the topic and makes them want to read more.

Unless given a specific set of guidelines by your teacher, one way to remember all the components that go into one's introduction is through the acronym **HEAD**.

Step 1: **Hook**-> The "attention-grabber." You need to interest your reader in your topic so that they will want to continue reading.

Choose 1 of: A Quote, a Statistic, or a Question, to peak the reader's interest.

Step 2: **Explain the Hook**-> Contextualize the hook and explain its significance. Stay on task and keep it simple and brief. For most assignments, it should be no more than 2-3 sentences long. For longer assignments, this section can also introduce readers to literature/theory/history that helps explain your subject.

Step 3: **Argument**-> Propose your thesis. A good thesis is specific, addresses the prompt (your assigned question) and makes a strong, defensible claim.

Step 4: **Describe** how you will defend your thesis-> This explains how you will defend your thesis. It also gives the reader a general sense of how you will organize your discussion points that make up the body of your essay.

Note: While it is not ideal, the writer can incorporate their discussion points into their thesis, so that it is one sentence.

Strategies to Avoid:

- Avoid phrases such as "Throughout history. . ." or "People believe. . ." or "Since the beginning of time. . ." because these phrases give the reader no actual information and are often problematic.

- Avoid providing dictionary definitions, especially of words your audience already knows. It is boring and can cause your reader to tune out.