

The Writing Centre

Writing an Effective Introduction

An effective introduction is a crucial part of any essay.

An introduction:

- introduces the topic
- establishes its relevance
- outlines your question
- contains the thesis statement
- outlines what you will do in your essay to support your argument.

Introductions tell the reader what will happen in the essay, without providing too much detail. Your introduction should make the reader want to read more about your topic, and provide an outline for what will happen in the body of the essay.

- 1) You can begin by making a statement or posing a question about your topic. This will introduce it to the reader.
- 2) You can put your topic in context and explain its relevance by stating what about that topic is interesting, important, or puzzling. Think of writing a brief answer to the question “so what”?
- 3) When writing an essay you have to state a position on the topic in question. In your introduction you must clarify not only what your topic is, but what argument you will be making about it.
- 4) Once you have stated the question you will try to answer in your essay, or the issue you will try to resolve, you can outline *how* you will do this. Remember, in your introduction you are establishing what you will do in your essay, but you are not actually doing it yet. You can outline the approach you will take to your argument or your main points, but do not give any evidence in the introduction.
- 5) You must state your thesis in your introduction. This serves the purpose of making your argument clear for your reader from the start. You can also look back at your thesis statement in order to make sure you have stayed on track and done what you have said you would do throughout your paper.