

Writing a Perfect Essay: Introduction

The goal:

The goal of an introduction is to hook the reader into your essay and inform them of the topic that you are writing about.

The Structure:

There are several key elements that are needed to make a perfect introduction paragraph, with each element representing a different sentence. The elements are a clincher sentence, sentences that preview your essay, and your thesis statement.

The Clincher Sentence:

This sentence is a sentence that grabs the reader's attention. It is usually vague and can start out with the phrase, "In life, as well as literature,..."

Sentences that preview the essay:

These sentences start to narrow your reader's focus for the essay. In these sentences, you will introduce the story or book that you are going to be using.

Thesis Statement:

Your thesis statement will tell the reader exactly what your essay is going to be about. If you took every other sentence out of the paragraph and all that was left was the thesis statement, the reader should understand what the essay is about. When you are writing a thesis statement, you are to underline it. Your thesis statement should be the last sentence in your paragraph.

Common Mistakes in an introduction:

- **Avoid** a purpose statement, such as "The purpose of this..." "Now I shall prove", "in this paragraph I will tell you" **SHOW -DON'T TELL**
- **Avoid** repetition of the title or text
- **Avoid** complex or difficult questions that may puzzle your reader
- **Avoid** simple definitions - **EXPLAIN**
- **Avoid** artwork or cute lettering

Example:

Question: Using a story that you have read in class, discuss how a character had to overcome a conflict in order to achieve his or her goal.

In life, as well as literature, people have to overcome obstacles (I gave a very general statement about people, but it closely relates to the essay). Sometimes the obstacles are physical and others are inside a person's own head (Now, I am starting to narrow down my topic, but I am still referring to real life, not the book). This is especially true when a boy wants to talk to a girl for the first time (This is what my topic is about, but I have not used the book to describe it). In the short story "Seventh Grade" by Gary Soto, Victor has to overcome his conflict of person vs. self in order to talk to the girl he likes, Teresa. (This is my thesis statement, it tells the reader exactly what my essay will be about)