
The Introductory Paragraph

One of the most important paragraphs in your essay!

What is the purpose of the introductory paragraph?

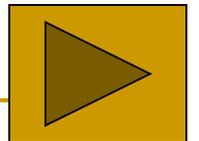
- Get the reader's attention
 - Set tone for the rest of the essay
 - Make a contract with the reader - what will be covered in this piece?
-

The Parts of the Introductory Paragraph

- The Hook - Designed to grab attention immediately and give some indication about the essay's topic
 - The Transition - Moves the reader from the hook to the driving force of the essay....
 - The Thesis - Makes the contract with the reader about what will be discussed without a blatant announcement.
-

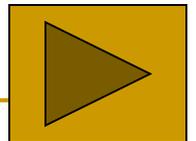
Order of writing an introduction

1. Write the thesis statement first.
2. Write a hook and place it before the thesis.
3. Develop a transition to guide your reader to the thesis statement.



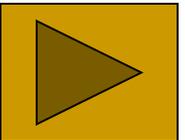
Types of Hooks

- 1. Personal examples / narratives**
- 2. Quotations**
- 3. Facts or statistics**
- 4. Ask a question**
- 5. Current events**
- 6. Contrast to the thesis statement**
- 7. Argue against a cliché or common idea**
- 8. Ask the reader to imagine**



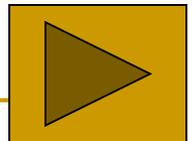
Personal Examples

- An anecdote (personal story, narrative) that is interesting
- Inspires reader to trust you or to make a personal connection
- Can be a personal observation – a conclusion based on a personal experience
- Must highly interesting
- Some of your best writing will come from topics that you have had experience with.



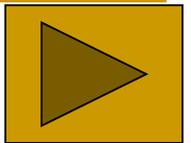
Personal Example Hook 1

On Friday, February 19, 2011, life changed for an eighteen-year-old young man. He became very ill from a bacterial infection. His body could not fight the infection. Why? After a week of tests and examinations by several specialists, the diagnosis was made. He had leukemia, a cancer of the bone marrow. I am that young man. When a person finds out that he has cancer, just as I did, his whole world changes. *A cancer patient is affected physically, psychologically, and socially by the impact of cancer.*



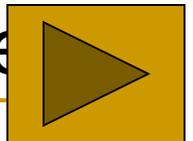
Personal Example Hook 2

One morning a young mother had her seven-month old son in his stroller under the peach tree near the family pool. She walked to the kitchen to get a knife so she could peel the peach for him. Ten seconds later, she found him facedown with the stroller at the bottom of the pool. She immediately pulled him out and administered CPR to her son. If she had been gone any longer, he might have been one of the statistics that plague our country every year. *These child drownings could be greatly reduced if parents never left their children unattended around water, if pools were properly fenced, and if other safety devices were installed in or by the pool.*



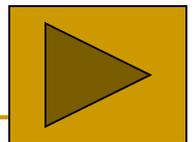
Using Quotes

- A relevant quote that relates to the thesis statement
- Content of quote should be:
 - Dramatic
 - Emotionally appealing
 - Surprising
 - Humorous
- Quote does not have to be from a famous person
- Writer must provide citation and works cited page, if required.



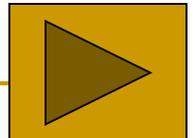
Hook with Quotations Example 1

- “The mind is its own place, and in itself can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven” (255). This thought by John Milton was recorded over four hundred years ago, but it is still timely for us today. He seems to be saying that we are the ones to control our lives. We can be miserable when things are going well, just as we can be happy when things are going wrong. *With this thought in mind, we can control the way we face life through our attitude, our determination, and our ability.*



Hook with Quotations Example 2

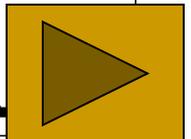
- “I am stupid. I am never going back to school.” These are the words spoken by a learning disabled child when he was in first grade. He cried as he slowly walked to his bedroom, shredding his schoolwork into small pieces. This was the first of many times when he and his parents would feel frustrated because there was nothing that they could do. Parents of children with learning disabilities have often felt unprepared to help their children with their handicaps and frustrated with attempts to seek the proper placement of them in the public-school system. The experience of school can be overwhelming for children who have trouble learning. *The learning disabled student in the public educational system must deal with academic, social, and emotional problems.*



Using Facts or Statistics

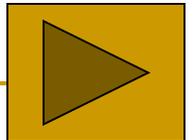
- Must be startling or unusual
- Must be from a credible source
- Use journal as a place to record both quotes and facts or statistics that might work for an introduction
- Writer must provide citation and works cited page, if required.

“Just the facts,
please.”



Hook: Facts or Statistics Example 2

- According to an article in *Family Safety & First Aid*, published by Berkley Books, “... every 45 seconds a fire breaks out in an American home – 700,000 residences aflame each year. And 16 times a day somebody dies in one of these burning homes” (45). These statistics are frightening and should not be taken lightly. The best way to deal with the possibility of loss from fire is to plan ahead before it happens. Otherwise, it is too late. In order not to become one of these statistics, *Americans need to equip their homes with safety devices, set and adhere to safety rules, and practice a family escape plan in order to protect their families.*



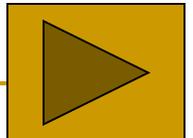
Pose a Question

- A rhetorical question is a question with no right or wrong answer.
- Ask the reader to consider an important or unusual question.
- The question should lead the reader to consider some aspect of your thesis.



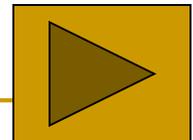
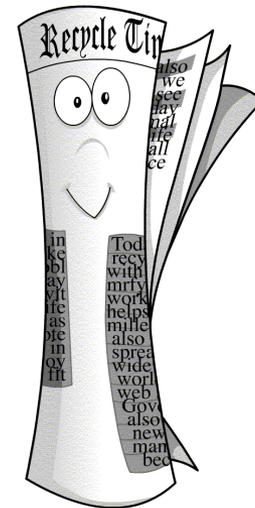
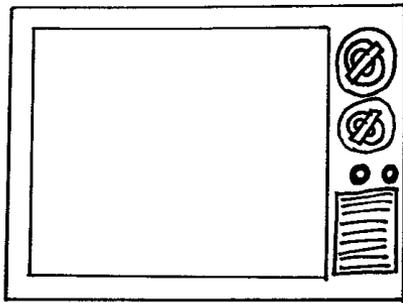
Hook: Ask a Question Example 1

- Can you read someone else's thoughts? Is it possible to communicate long-distance without technology? Answers to these questions seem outside of the realm of science, but new research in quantum physics is proving that information can, indeed, travel long distances. Researchers at Cornell university have recently discovered that quantum particles can communicate thousands of miles away from each-other, transmitting information in ways we never thought possible. Quantum physics may hold the answer to light-speed communication, and it is only a matter of time before information is only a thought away.



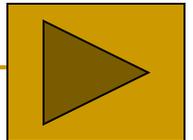
Using Current Events

- Must be recent
- Must be important
- Should be made public by newspapers, television, or radio



Example

- This morning's news reported that a young girl, age 5, was abducted from her classroom. As a frantic search ensued, people across the Philadelphia area were shocked to find that the kidnapper walked right into the child's classroom and demanded that the young kindergartner leave with the woman. The child managed to escape and was found, but she had been attacked by her captors. Obviously, safety procedures broke down and this poor child paid the price. *In order to assure the safety of all children, schools across the country must review safety procedures, tighten safety protocols where necessary, and assure all staff members are properly trained.*



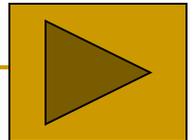
Using Contrast to the Thesis Statement

- Discuss ideas, facts, stories that go against your thesis
- Your thesis will work as a rebuttal (argument against) these ideas.
- Good for persuasive papers
- Thesis must present a definitive argument against your hook.



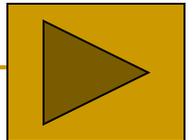
Example

- Since the middle 1940s, the female *Cannabis sativa* plant, commonly known as marijuana, has been classified by the United States government as a Schedule I drug. This classification recognizes marijuana as a dangerous narcotic, similar in potency to heroin and possessing no redeeming medicinal qualities. Research in the last few years, however, has brought many new discoveries in medicine relating to the possible uses of marijuana to treat many different illnesses. *Marijuana has been found to be effective in treating glaucoma, cancer, and phantom limb pain suffered by paraplegics and amputees.*



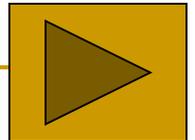
Argue against a Cliche

- Take a commonly held viewpoint (cliché) and argue against it.
- Make sure that your argument relates to your thesis.



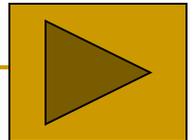
Hook: Argue against a Cliché Example

- Politicians, athletes, and scholars would do well to embrace the sweet smell of failure. Our society values those who seem to succeed without trying, but the reality of what it takes to accomplish success is much more complex. Some of the most famous writers, athletes, and scientists in human history have long records of failure, and psychology explains why failure is a necessary step to great discovery.



Ask the reader to imagine something

- Vividly describe a scene, situation, or event for your reader.
- The scene must be surprising, emotionally charged, or unusual in some way.
- Invite your reader to participate in this thought exercise by using the pronoun “you”
- The thought exercise should lead the reader to think about something that relates to your thesis



Hook: Invite reader to imagine

- Imagine that you are driving fast down a dark, desolate highway at night. The car's headlights can barely pierce through the inky shadow. Suddenly, a deer appears, walking slowly across the road. Do you slam on the brakes or do you take your chances? Moments such as these test the limits of human response, and researchers in car safety are greatly interested in discovering new ways of decreasing driver response time. New brake technology will save lives by decreasing response time, keeping the driver alert, and increasing vehicle stability.

