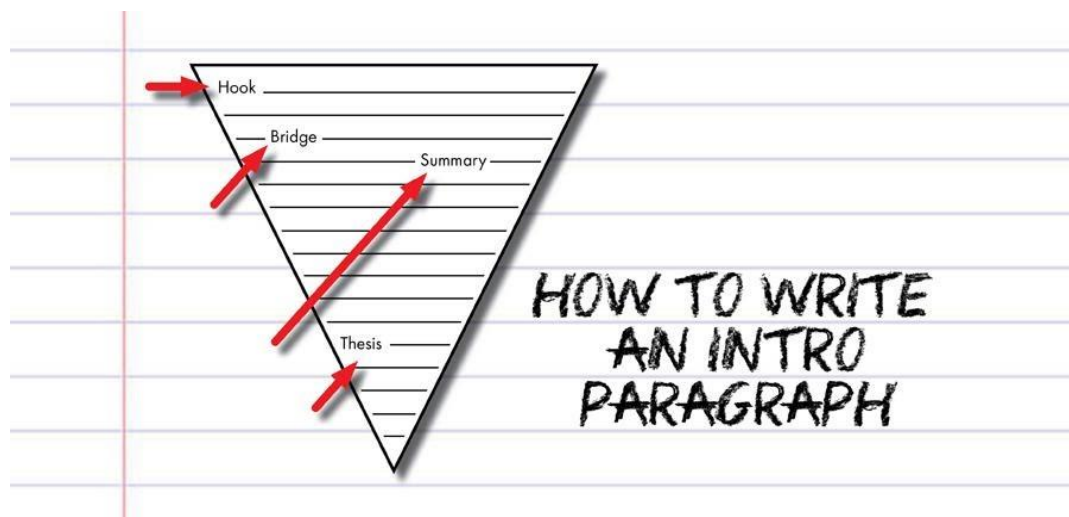


## Introduction

Previously we defined what a paragraph is and explored the features of a paragraph briefly. We explained that every paragraph typically consists of a topic sentence, supporting details and a concluding remark. This applies to introductory paragraphs, but in this unit we go slightly deeper and describe what each of the three components should do. We want to teach you a method you can use when writing essays, lab reports or any assignment that consist of bringing various ideas together to answer a question posed to you.

Introductory paragraphs serve two distinct functions: 1) They introduce the topic of a piece of writing to the reader in a way that catches and holds their attention. 2). They indicate how the topic will be discussed or analysed in the paragraphs that follow. This is very often a subtle process that cannot be reduced to a formula. In the diagram below you will see that an introductory paragraph begins with a broad statement on a particular topic, before this statement is discussed in more specific terms in what is referred to as the bridge and summary. This is also referred to as background information that leads to the final component of the introductory paragraph, the thesis. The paragraph ends with a concluding sentence that tells the reader what stance or approach will be adopted in the paragraphs that follow; this is called the thesis statement.



With this basic definition it is possible to explore how each component should be written as the introductory paragraph is composed.

## Learning Content

An introduction is a very important paragraph in any academic writing. This is because it is the part of the assignment where all relevant information that will provide clarity to the reader is given. It also gives the writer the opportunity to guide and control the expectations of the reader. Some people write introductions first and use it to structure their writing, while others write it last and capture what the assignment is about only after it has already been concluded. It is important to do what works for you as long as it meets the following criteria.

1) It must introduce the topic of the piece of writing, and 2) clearly explain what will be covered in the paragraphs that follow. This is also referred to as the scope of the essay, lab report, assignment, etc. 3). It must formulate a thesis statement, which specifies the basic idea that will be argued, discussed or analysed.

The following video explains three main parts of the introduction. It focuses on the elements of the introduction that need to be included and those that should be excluded. Pay close attention to these three components of introductory paragraphs.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4WDclqoGouY&feature=youtu.be>

From the video you just watch it is clear that the introductory paragraph of an essay serves the purpose of drawing a reader into the substance of the argument that follows. It is necessary to note that different disciplines have different requirements for what an appropriate introduction should do. You should always consult your professor before beginning any writing assignment. An effective introduction usually includes:

1. an attention-grabber;
2. necessary background information and
3. the thesis statement

The introductory paragraph is the first thing your readers will see, you want to be sure to grab their attention. **Attention-grabbers** can be a quote, an anecdote (story), a description, a rhetorical question, etc. No matter what choice you make, your goal is to hook your readers as soon as possible so they want to continue reading. The hook is also a fine way to establish the tone of your paper as well.

**Background** information includes a brief summary of the context, relevance, or significance of your topic for an uninformed reader. Depending on the kind of paper you are writing, you might have to identify key people, places, define relevant terms, and/or establish a timeline.

Be careful not to overload your introduction with too much information, as it will distract rather than clarify your purpose for writing.

The **thesis statement** is a one or two-sentence summary of the main argument made in the paper. Your thesis should clearly state one specific, debatable idea. In other words, your thesis is the focused argument you plan to support and develop throughout your essay.

## Activity

Read the following example and try to identify what is missing from it.

### **Introduction example**

Technology has had a great impact on how people live their lives all over the world. Some people argue that this impact has been positive and others argue that it has been negative. This impact is felt in all spheres of life and in everyday lives of the people. Education has also felt this impact in many ways. Even though there are many challenges in using it for education, technology has introduced many positives in the field of teaching and learning.

## Summary

In this unit, you learned about the role of an introduction in writing and the features of an introduction. It is important that your introduction follows the given features in order to achieve the aims of an introduction in making reading work easy and clear. Oh, and to answer our own question. It is clear that the introduction has not taken a specific stance on the impact of technology on education. The thesis statement is missing.

Before you start writing take a look at the following websites and the worksheet we provided below. They provide further tips and suggestions on how introductory paragraphs can be written:

Resource	Time needed	Link
Thought Co	10 mins	<a href="https://www.thoughtco.com/the-introductory-paragraph-1857260">https://www.thoughtco.com/the-introductory-paragraph-1857260</a>
Tought Co	10 mins	<a href="https://www.thoughtco.com/introductory-paragraph-essays-and-reports-1691081">https://www.thoughtco.com/introductory-paragraph-essays-and-reports-1691081</a>
WikiHow	10 mins	<a href="https://www.wikihow.com/Write-an-Introduction-Paragraph">https://www.wikihow.com/Write-an-Introduction-Paragraph</a>

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Period \_\_\_\_\_

## **GUIDE TO WRITING AN INTRODUCTORY PARAGRAPH**

Your introductory paragraph does NOT need to be longer than four or five sentences.  
There are 4 parts to an INTRODUCTION:

1) **Hook sentence(s)/Attention-Getter**: You want to capture your reader's attention with something interesting

What can you do to grab someone's attention?

1. Story
2. Quotation
3. Simile
4. Sensory Descriptions
5. VERY INTERESTING question
6. Fact or Statistic

2) **Explain the hook**: tell me why the hook is important to your topic

3) **Transition Sentence**: tell me how your hook and your thesis statement will be connected

4) **Thesis Statement**: ONE sentence that has your opinion, the prompt, and 3 points of discussion. NEVER EVER EVER say "MY ESSAY IS GOING TO BE ABOUT" or "I WANT TO TELL YOU ABOUT," just tell me.

### **Example:**

"A dog is man's best friend." That common saying may contain some truth, but dogs are not the only animal friend whose companionship people enjoy. For many people, a cat is their best friend. **Despite what dog lovers may believe, cats make excellent house pets as they are good companions, they are civilized members of the household, and they are easy to care for.**