

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.**

Hook Sentence/Attention Getter Practice

Directions: Write a hook sentence(s) for each of the following topics. Use 1 of each of the six ways we discussed to create an interesting hook.

Trip to the Amazon Rainforest: _____

How to Study for a Test: _____

Owning a Pet is a Big responsibility: _____

A person I admire: _____

The Best Sport Is: _____

The Driving Age Needs to Be Raised to Eighteen: _____

Thesis Statements: MORE INFORMATION

A thesis statement always follows the following formula:

subject + attitude(opinion) + joining word + 3 supports

Subject:

choose a topic that is not TOO BROAD or TOO GENERAL

For the PSSA the topic is given to you and for most class assignments the topic is given to you.

Attitude:

what you want to show or prove about your topic

It is often an adjective: beneficial, difficult, maddening

Joining Word:

because, since, as, due to, by, in, in that, etc.

Three Supports:

the reasons for your attitude toward the subject

These 3 supports will be the topic of each of your three body paragraphs

Each support should be broad enough that you can discuss it for an entire paragraph

You also need to make sure that the three supports are written in parallel structure

What is Parallel Structure?

When all 3 parts of your thesis statement are written in the same form

Correct: In order to be financially secure you need to save money, buy stock, and work a lot.

Not: In order to be financially secure you need to make a lot of money, buy stock, and you need to work a lot.

Correct: The best way to sell a car is to make sure that it is clean, that it is priced well, and that it is in good condition.

Not: The best way to sell a car is to make sure that it is clean, that it is priced well, and is in good condition.

Thesis Statement Practice

Each of the following thesis statements are not divided into three supports. Choose a joining word and add three separate supports that are parallel.

1. As a teenager I must deal with pressure coming from many different sources.

2. Contemporary music can be divided into several categories.

3. Most of the teachers I have encountered throughout my career as a student seem to fit certain stereotypes.

4. Sometimes I find it very difficult to divide my time among the several roles I must play during the day.

More Thesis Statement Practice

Too Broad (TB) or Too Narrow (TN)?

- _____1. The way our society treats its elderly is unbelievable.
- _____2. The first major car manufacturer in the United States was Ford.
- _____3. Computers have changed our society.
- _____4. People who eat a lot of red meat are almost three times more likely to get colon cancer than people who eat mostly fish and chicken.
- _____5. Action must be taken against drugs.

Announcement (A) or More than One Idea (MOL)?

- _____6. My last car was dependable, but many American cars are poorly made.
- _____7. The subject of this essay is prayer in our public schools.
- _____8. Soap operas show many stereotyped characters, although they also portray real problems in American life.
- _____9. I am going to write about the best sport in the world: soccer.

Even More Thesis Statement Practice

Directions: The following incomplete thesis statements are missing either subjects or attitudes/opinions and supports. Supply what is missing to state your personal views.

1. Thinking about the future sometimes leave me feeling _____

2. My very best friend is _____ because _____

3. I feel that a college education, in my particular case, is _____ since

4. My favorite style of music is _____ because _____

5. The one person who has impressed me the most in my life is _____

because _____

6. My dream car is a _____ because _____

7. _____ is one of the best movies I have even seen in

that _____

Writing Your Own Thesis Statements

Prompt/ Subject	What is the most important thing you have ever learned?
Attitude/ Opinion	
Supports	1. 2. 3.
Thesis Statement	

Prompt/ Subject	What would make the world a better place?
Attitude/ Opinion	
Supports	1. 2. 3.
Thesis Statement	

Prompt/ Subject	Is having a job as a teenager a valuable experience?
Attitude/ Opinion	
Supports	1. 2. 3.
Thesis Statement	

Prompt/ Subject	What is the best or worst pet?
Attitude/ Opinion	
Supports	1. 2. 3.
Thesis Statement	

GUIDE TO WRITING A BODY PARAGRAPH

Each body paragraph has 8 major parts and should be no less than 8 sentences.
There will be 3 of these in your 5 paragraph essay.

1. **Topic Sentence**: this sentence should come right from your Thesis Statement. Your 3 supports will make your 3 topic sentences. It should also begin with some kind of **TRANSITION**.
2. **1st Major Point**: This is where you explain your first major reason for having this support in your thesis.
3. **1st Minor Point**: Use one of the 5 E's to add to your 1st Major Point
4. **2nd Major Point**: This is where you explain your second major reason for having this support in your thesis.
5. **2nd Minor Point**: Use one of the 5 E's to add to your 2nd Major Point
6. **3rd Major Point**: This is where you explain your third major reason for having this support in your thesis.
7. **3rd Minor Point**: Use one of the 5 E's to add to your 3rd Major Point
8. **Conclusion Sentence**: this sentence should summarize your paragraph without exactly restating your topic sentence AND should transition into the next paragraph.

The 5 E's

Examples

Evidence

Explanations

Experience

Events

Topic Sentence Example:

Body Paragraph 1:

The first reason social networking is a good website is because it helps connect with friends.

Body Paragraph 2:

The second reason social networking is a respectable website is because it helps solve crimes, begin events, and search for missing people.

Body Paragraph 3:

The third reason social networking is a respectable website is because it promotes businesses and marketing in a cheap way.

Examples:

In the first place, people enjoy the companionship of cats. Many cats are affectionate. They will snuggle up and ask to be petted, or scratched under the chin. Who can resist a purring cat? If they're not feeling affectionate, cats are generally quite playful. They love to chase balls and feathers, or just about anything dangling from a string. They especially enjoy playing when their owners are participating in the game. Contrary to popular opinion, cats can be trained. Using rewards and punishments, just like with a dog, a cat can be trained to avoid unwanted behavior or perform tricks. Cats will even fetch! Clearly cats can be a loyal companion.

In addition to being a companion, cats are civilized members of the household. Unlike dogs, cats do not bark or make other loud noises. Most cats don't even meow very often. They generally lead a quiet existence. Cats also don't often have "accidents." Mother cats train their kittens to use the litter box, and most cats will use it without fail from that time on. Even stray cats usually understand the concept when shown the box and will use it regularly. Cats do have claws, and owners must make provision for this. A tall scratching post in a favorite cat area of the house will often keep the cat content to leave the furniture alone. As a last resort, of course, cats can be declawed; but most cats are completely civilized.

Lastly, one of the most attractive features of cats as house pets is their ease of care. Cats do not have to be walked. They get plenty of exercise in the house as they play, and they do their business in the litter box. Cleaning a litter box is a quick, painless procedure. Cats also take care of their own grooming. Bathing a cat is almost never necessary because under ordinary circumstances cats clean themselves. Cats are more particular about personal cleanliness than people are. In addition, cats can be left home alone for a few hours without fear. Unlike some pets, most cats will not destroy the furnishings when left alone. They are content to go about their usual activities until their owners return. Having a pet that is easy to care for takes a lot of weight off the owners shoulders.

GUIDE TO WRITING A CONCLUDING PARAGRAPH

Your concluding paragraph will be your last paragraph and can be as little as 4 sentences.

1. **Summary Sentence:** this should summarize your three main points without being repetitive. It should also begin with a **transition**.

SOME GOOD CONCLUDING TRANSITIONS:

As you can see; It is clear that; Certainly; Without a doubt; Most would agree; Indeed; Surely; Unquestionably; Obviously

2. **Leave with a BANG:** Your last 3 sentences should accomplish some of the following tasks

- Call your reader to action: Tell them that they should take some sort of action based on what you have written.
- Give your reader a recommendation: Give them advice about your topic.
- Give your reader something to think about: If you can make a REALLY profound statement about your topic, do it here and leave your reader really pondering something.
- Connect back to your really awesome Attention-Getter: If you can remind your reader of your really awesome attention getter they will realize that your whole paper makes sense from beginning to end.

Example:

To sum up, cats are low maintenance, civilized companions. People who have small living quarters or less time for pet care should appreciate these characteristics of cats. However, many people who have plenty of space and time still opt to have a cat because they love the cat personality. In many ways, cats are the ideal house pet and you should definitely consider adopting one.