

INTRODUCTIONS

The introduction should catch the reader's interest as well as suggest the tone of the essay. Be sure to include the main point in your thesis statement, usually the last sentence. Below are some suggestions with examples for ways to write an introduction.

1. Move from the general to the specific:

When we think of "strength," we usually picture physical strength—for instance, a weight lifter. But there are subtler forms of strength. Perhaps the rarest is moral strength: the ability to do what is right, even when it is inconvenient, unpopular, or dangerous. My grandfather in Italy was actually a strongman in the circus, but I remember him for his moral strength rather than for his powerful arms.

2. Begin with a brief quotation:

"Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country," said John F. Kennedy in his inaugural address to the nation in 1961.

3. Begin with a question:

How is the world going to provide food, clothing, shelter, and jobs as we head toward having five billion people? Until the answer to this question can be found, we must find a way to encourage family planning with the goal of having zero population growth.

4. Use data or statistics:

Research has shown that excessive noise exposure is a leading cause of ear damage. Any noise level with a decibel count of over 85 attacks the inner ear's 16,000 hair cells. For example, a jackhammer has a decibel count of 130, a rock concert has 120, and a video arcade has 110.

5. Use startling evidence or a surprising statement:

Two out of every three people in the world today live on a starvation diet.

Up to 55 uncontacted and undiscovered Indian groups are believed to live in remote pockets of the Amazon, which most anthropologists consider to be the last place on Earth where such tribes dwell.

6. Begin with a narrative:

In our isolated Greek village, my mother had bribed a cousin to teach her to read, for girls were not supposed to attend school beyond a certain age. She had always dreamed of receiving an education.

7. Begin with a definition:

A New England clambake is a huge cookout held on a beach, usually in the summertime. After digging a large pit in the sand, people gather rocks and firewood to put in the pit. When the rocks are hot, the cooks add clams and corn-on-the-cob, covering all with seaweed.

8. Start with the opposing idea:

The role of computers in schools is constantly growing. Such growth is based on a widespread faith that computers can answer many of the learning needs of our students. Many people believe that it is just a matter of time before computers take the place of teachers. However, educators should be cautious about introducing computers into curriculums. Computers may interfere with the learning of critical language skills, move too fast for students to digest new concepts, and be poor substitutes for certain real-world experiences.

9. Provide background information:

Five percent of the population has attention deficit disorder (ADD), a neurological condition that makes people distractible, hyperactive, and unable to concentrate. At one time, ADD was thought of as a childhood disorder that was outgrown by the age of 18. However, researchers currently believe that it may continue beyond adolescence. Thus, colleges should make special provision for the significant number of students who have ADD.