



Writing Center

Bowling Green State University
303 Moseley Hall
(419) 372-2221
writers@bgsu.edu

TIPS:

Types of opening paragraphs (according to *The Scott Foresman Handbook for Writers* (SFH), pages 246-250):

- 1.) Begin with a narrative.
- 2.) Begin with a description that establishes tone and forecasts content.
- 3.) Begin with a question or a series of questions that relate to your topic
- 4.) Begin by quoting a key source.
- 5.) Start with your thesis.

If you are still have questions about **introductions**, then refer to your **SFH**, 7th ed. Introductions are discussed on pages 246-250. Be sure to read the effective examples.

Revised by Amanda McGuire 2005

Moseley Hall Hours:

Mon, Tues, Thurs	9-5
Wed	9-8
Fri	9-2

Bromfield Satellite Hours:

Sun & Mon	6-10pm
-----------	--------

MacDonald Satellite Hours:

Sun & Tues	6-10pm
------------	--------

H. S. R. C. Satellite Hours:

Sun & Tues	6-11pm
Mon & Wed	6-10pm

Introductions

1. What makes an effective introductory paragraph?

According to *The Scott Foresman Handbook for Writers*, 7th ed., opening paragraph should:

- Get the readers' attention and interest them in reading more.
- Make a *commitment* to readers—that is introduce your main idea in a way that promises to follow up with more information.
- Signal to readers what direction your project will take.
- Set the tone of your project. "A thesis is a sentence (or sometimes two or three sentences) that explicitly identifies the point of the paper" (30).

2. Are you stumped on the first sentence to write?

- Relax! The most important thing to do initially is to get your thoughts down on paper. First sentences, and introductory paragraphs too, can always be reworked/revised at any point in your writing process.

3. Good opening paragraphs do contain a few essential components, however, which include:

- an introduction to the topic the paper deals with (a general sentence or two will suffice);
- background information about the topic (dates, statistics, scenarios, etc.) that will help familiarize your readers and generate interest; and
- the paper's thesis statement (which is usually reserved for the last sentence(s) of the opening paragraph and may also include a list of the reasons you'll use throughout the paper to support it).

4. Why is the opening paragraph important?

- The opening paragraph prepares readers for what they're about to read.
- Also, it provides the readers (as well as the writer) with the paper's basic organization.

For instance, if your thesis statement is "Music is not the only factor that can negatively influence a teenager's behavior. Television viewing habits, upbringing, and the school environment also may be to blame," then your readers know that your paper is going to be organized according to three main points—television viewing, upbringing, and the school environment—as they relate to your thesis.