1. **What makes an introductory paragraph effective?**
   - Make a commitment to readers—that is introduce your main idea in a way that promises to follow up with more information. This is often found in the paper’s thesis statement.
     - “A thesis is a sentence (or sometimes two or three sentences) that explicitly identifies the point of the paper.”
   - Get the readers’ attention and interest them in reading more.
   - Signal to readers what direction your project will take. Set the tone.
   - Provide a general introduction to the topic of the paper
     - This consists of background information about the topic (dates, statistics, scenarios, etc.) that will help familiarize your readers with your content

2. **What are some ways I can begin an opening paragraph?**
   - a narrative, either of something that happened or an applicable hypothetical situation
   - a description that establishes tone and forecasts content
   - a question (hypothetical or not) or series of questions that relate to your topic
   - an interesting key source
   - a surprising statistic or fact
   - a notable or memorable quote, preferably from an expert in the area or other notable person
   - your thesis

3. **What are some things I might want to avoid in my opening paragraph?**
   - dictionary definitions, unless they’re of genuinely obscure words that readers really won’t know the meaning of
   - detailed information that will be expanded on at length in your body paragraphs
   - paraphrases or direct quotation of your instructor’s assignment
   - counterarguments (which may confuse your readers until your argument itself is well-developed)

4. **Why is the opening paragraph important?**
   - The opening paragraph prepares readers for what they are 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.

5. **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.