



Writing Introductions

Advice from UDM Writing Center Consultant Nick Yim, Digital Media Studies

An introduction can be the most important part of a paper. Imagine watching a movie you've never seen before, but you must start thirty minutes in. You would have no sense of who the characters are, where they have come from, or what their internal and external conflicts are. Just like a paper, you need a back-story for what is going on. The reader and viewer are on a journey and need to be informed about the road to be traveled. An introduction can be compared to directions or a handbook manual; they are pertinent if you are to build something—a bookcase, a treehouse, or a paper in this case.

When constructing an introduction, you should be sure to have a thesis statement. The thesis statement is like your personality. You need to stay true with it throughout your paper. Never contradict what you are claiming in your thesis statement; stick with it and make sure your reader is convinced of said claim. Your introduction needs to be on point with everything you declare in your paper, no matter the assignment: analytical essay, rhetorical analysis, summary, argumentative essay, research paper, reaction/response essay, etc.

Your introduction is a way to capture your reader and persuade them to continue reading. Picture your readers as Hansel and Gretel, and your paper's introduction as the sweet, gingerbread house of the witch. You need to visually and aesthetically draw them in, hungry for whatever you have to offer. Don't show them the inside of the house yet, though. Give a brief, appealing description that welcomes in curious, wandering readers. As you do so, something to keep in mind is to avoid clichés, not only in the introduction but your whole paper. They are as common as wind blowing through the trees.

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