

Writing Introductions

In an expository essay, an introduction may be made up of three parts:

- Introductory Technique (4-6 sentences)
- Transition (1-2 sentences)
- Thesis statement (one sentence)

The Introductory Technique (or “Hook”) grabs the reader’s attention and gives the reader the context in which to understand your essay. There are several techniques with which to start an essay:

- Provide some background information.
- Tell a short, relevant anecdote (or story).
- Give a quotation and its relationship to your essay.
- Define key terms.
- Provide an example or brief examples.
- Give statistics that may surprise your reader.
- Ask a rhetorical question (or questions).
- Draw an extended comparison (or analogy).

The Transition, of course, connects your “Hook” to your thesis statement. Your thesis statement states the main point of your essay.

Student Example. Topic: A place you would like to visit but may not appeal to others.

My fascination with my heritage started as a child. I can remember my grandparents telling stories around the dinner table about how life in Cuba once was. Their lifestyle was so rich and seemed to be so full of luxuries that I fantasized about growing up there at that time. They talked about homes, land, and businesses which they owned. The lifestyle was filled with family, cabarets, private clubs, chauffeurs and maids. It all seemed so exciting and glamorous to me, as though I were reading a fairytale. ***Although Cuba might not appeal to others as a place they would like to visit because of its current economic and political climate, I would find it interesting to be able to see and know where my heritage actually came from.***

Student Example. Topic: An activity people participate in despite the risks.

The day was sunny and beautiful. A light breeze helped cool the hot sun's rays as they touched the bodies of the divers on-board. The divers were sailing off into the high seas in search of a great adventure, shark diving. The boat ran smoothly on top of the water, as the people aboard the boat began to prepare for the experience of swimming with sharks. When the boat reached its destination, the divers got on the side of the boat and prepared to enter a new world. This new world that the divers planned to experience would be to some a death wish and to some the thrill of a lifetime. ***Despite the risks involved, many people seem to enjoy shark diving.***