

## The Introductory Paragraph

The first, or introductory, paragraph of an essay should prepare the reader for the **thesis statement** of the essay. Remember that a thesis statement is a one-sentence statement of the main idea of an essay. It is usually the last sentence of the introductory paragraph, and it answers the question “What are you trying to prove?”

So, how can a writer introduce a thesis statement effectively? Here are some ways:

1. A rhetorical question
2. A definition
3. A description of a situation
4. A brief history of the topic
5. A general statement followed by a specific example
6. A controversial or surprising statement
7. A quotation
8. Reference to a current event
9. An anecdote
10. A startling fact or statistic

Any one, or any combination, of these can make up the part of the **introductory paragraph** that leads to the thesis.

Introductory paragraph  
Thesis

Body paragraph

Body paragraph

Body paragraph

Concluding paragraph