

# INTRODUCTIONS

## HOW TO START YOUR PAPER WITH GUSTO

A good introduction draws the reader into your topic and presents your specific argument. It “introduces” your thesis and how you will prove it. In addition to topic and argument, the introduction establishes tone style. Think of the introduction as your way of inviting your readers from the outside world into the world of your paper.

### Introduction Checklist

An introduction should answer the following questions:

1. What is this?
2. Why am I reading it?
3. What will it cover?

Answer these questions by doing the following:

1. *Set the context* – provide general information about the main idea, explaining the situation in a way that invites the reader into your specific paper. In other words,  
DO grab the reader’s attention.  
DON’T begin with a statement so general, it could be applied to any paper.
2. *Establish why the main idea is important* – tell the reader why s/he should care and keep reading.
3. *State your thesis/claim* – compose a sentence or two stating the position you will support with logos (sound reasoning: induction, deduction), pathos (balanced emotional appeal), and ethos (author credibility).
4. *Provide a road map* – let the reader know how you will prove your thesis/claim, i.e. the main points or sub-sections, or your general strategy/approach. This way the reader knows what to anticipate in terms of depth of argument, basic content covered, etc. The road map is especially important for a long paper.

### Thesis Statement

More than a general statement about your main idea, your thesis needs to establish a clear position you will support with logical evidence and thorough discussion/analysis. This is your statement of argument.

The thesis statement presents your particular subject and the argument/interpretation/angle you will use to discuss it. A good thesis is precise and concise.

Remember, a thesis is NOT:

- a title. Instead of stating only, *Homes and schools*, (title) tell the reader what you are saying *about* homes and schools: *Parents ought to participate more in the education of their children*.
- a statement of absolute fact. Jane Austen is the author of *Pride and Prejudice*. Your thesis statement should indicate the kind of *analysis* you will conduct.
- the whole essay. A thesis is your main idea/claim/refutation/problem-solution expressed in a single sentence or a combination of sentences. Establish your main argument, but leave the details for the body paragraphs.

### Bibliography

In creating this handout, we consulted and/or modified information from the following sources:

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/724/01/>

<http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/introductions.html>