

**STEP 6 Drafting the First Attempt: The Introduction**

Some writers prefer to begin writing with the introductory paragraph. Others prefer to begin with the body paragraphs. Use whichever method suits you.

No matter when you write it, your introduction must attract the reader's attention and set the tone for the paper. You may choose to use one of the following approaches:

- 1 • Say something startling, either by making a statement or by giving statistics. For example:

To form one cubic inch of stalactite, that stone icicle found hanging from cave ceilings, nature requires about 100 years.

This statistic startles the reader who has seen stalactites the diameter of a human body dropping 20 or more feet from a cave ceiling.

- 2 • Describe a compelling scene or situation:

One week before St. Patrick's Day, the plane touched down at London's Heathrow International Airport. A train was there to take the tour group to Devonshire, the land of rolling hills and centuries-old stone fences. Settled into their coaches, the group relaxed and let busy London glide past them as they slipped into something more comfortable—the rural, pastoral English spring.

The scene helps the reader identify with the mood and perhaps arouses some curiosity. What happens to the tour group?

- 3 • Refer to an event, either historical or current, perhaps in the form of a story or conversation:

A year ago today, Jerrod Hunt graduated from high school. He and his friends celebrated even before the formal ceremony, but the real celebration came afterward. Today, Jerrod is trying desperately to learn to walk again.

The reader anticipates what has happened to Jerrod.

- 4 • Show a controversy, contradiction, or unusual opinion.

Despite computerized technology and presorted, zip-coded mail, most of us open an envelope with a handwritten address first.

A contradiction is posed between technology and the personal touch.

- 5 • Ask a question: *must provide answer*  
 What keeps woodpeckers from destroying their brains when they pound relentlessly on wood?

A thought-provoking question is asked about a common occurrence.

- 6 • Use a quotation, adage, or proverb:  
 It's not what you know but who you know.

The reader wonders whether the writer will agree or disagree with this adage.

Other methods will serve as well. These offer a place to start.

Finally, conclude your introductory paragraph with the thesis sentence.

### STEP 7 **Drafting the First Attempt: The Body**

In Step 4, you wrote topic sentences for the three body paragraphs of the theme. Now write a transition that will move readers from the thesis sentence of the introduction to the topic sentence of the first body paragraph. [See Revising later in Part I for a discussion of types of transitional devices.] The topic sentence may be the first sentence of the paragraph and include the transitional device, or it may appear later in the paragraph. In either case, develop the first paragraph using the method of development that seems most appropriate. Conclude the first paragraph with a reference to the topic sentence or with a clincher statement.

Next, develop the second body paragraph. Again, begin with a transition. Develop the topic with adequate supporting details. Add a conclusion.

Develop the third body paragraph in the same manner.

In summary, body paragraphs should have the following characteristics:

- An opening transition that connects it to the preceding paragraph
- A topic sentence derived from the thesis sentence
- Supporting details, such as explanations, illustrations, examples, or reasons, to clarify the topic sentence
- Internal transitions to carry the reader's thought from one supporting detail to another
- A final statement, or conclusion, which may also act as a transition into the following paragraph