

## Introductory Strategies: Some Guidelines

Selected devices for introductory paragraphs:

1. Provide relevant background information for your topic.
2. Tell an interesting story or brief anecdote.
3. Ask a provocative question or questions.
4. Use an appropriate quotation.
5. Provide a pertinent statistic or statistics.
6. Make a useful analogy.
7. Define a term used throughout the essay. Don't open with a dictionary definition of a term your audience already knows, though, unless you plan to disagree with the dictionary.

What to avoid in introductory paragraphs:

1. Don't be too obvious. Avoid statements such as "In this paper, I will discuss the causes of falling oil prices" or "My assignment is to discuss the main character's motivation in this story." In other words, avoid announcing your topic. A well-written thesis statement should adequately inform your reader of the purpose of your essay without actually using the words "I will discuss" or "I will write about."
2. Don't apologize. Avoid self-critical statements such as "I do not have much background in this subject" or "I am not sure if I am right, but here is my opinion."
3. Don't use overworn expressions ( clichés). Avoid statements such as "Haste makes waste," "A penny saved is a penny earned," or "War is hell."