

Name: _____ Date: _____ Per: _____

Writing an Introductory Paragraph in Four Parts

1.	Global Opening	This sets the context for the topic of your paper. Be sure this is connected to the main topic you'll discuss. No quotations, no questions, no definitions.	2-3 sentences
2.	Bridge and present the work	Use a short sentence or even just a quick phrase to link the global opening to the specific literary work you'll discuss in the essay. Without a bridge, your introductory paragraph will feel choppy. Give the author's full name and the full title of the work being analyzed.	1 sentence
3.	Summarize	Offer a brief summary of the work and give its purpose. Again, be sure you are focusing on the part that will best connect with the focus of your paper.	2-3 sentences
4.	Thesis	Give a clear, detailed roadmap of the focus of this paper in one sentence. In papers this short, any more than one sentence is not clear enough.	1 sentence only.

The result should be an introduction that flows from broad to narrow with clear connections from one sentence to the next. **Suggestion:** Write these pieces in reverse. Start with your thesis and work backwards. This will ensure the other pieces all connect to your thesis.

Poor Example:

In Edwards's sermon, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" he uses metaphors and diction to help people see the realities of hell. This was written in 1741, and it is much different than sermons today. Rhetoric is important for people to picture in their minds what hell and punishment is like. Jonathan Edwards is a Puritan preacher who was part of the Great Awakening in early America. He uses alliteration when he talked about "the fiery floods of the fierceness and wrath of God." All in all, this is an important sermon, and we should listen to it.

Better Example:

We Americans tend to avoid thinking about eternal punishment. Even the religious among us eschew thoughts of hell's torments for the much more pleasant view of heavenly rewards. However, there may be some value in considering eternal consequences of earthly decisions. Jonathan Edwards, the 18th-century Puritan preacher, saw great value in considering hell and divine wrath. In his sermon "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God," Edwards offers a powerful picture of hell in a way only a Puritan can. This work is a passionate and graphic depiction of a sinner's relationship to God. Unlike modern sermons' feel-good tone, "Sinners" is filled with a "feel-bad" tone. According to Edwards, sinners are rebels, enemies, and objects of God's wrath. Unless we find help in a Mediator, we are destined to "drop down into hell." Edwards's pleading tone for lost souls along with his multifaceted use of metaphors describing God all work together to present his clear view of eternal damnation in order to convert sinners to Christ.

Thesis: Edwards's pleading tone for lost souls along with his multifaceted use of metaphors to describe God all work together to present his view of eternal damnation in order to convert sinners to Christ.

Summary: "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" is Jonathan Edwards's passionate and sometimes graphic depiction of a sinner's relationship to God. Unlike modern sermons' feel-good tone, "Sinners" is filled with a "feel-bad" tone. According to Edwards, sinners are rebels, enemies, and objects of God's wrath. Unless we find help in a Mediator, we are destined to "drop down into hell."

Bridge and present the work: In his sermon "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God," Jonathan Edwards offers a powerful picture of hell in a way only a Puritan can.

Global Opening: We Americans tend to avoid thinking about eternal punishment. Even the religious among us eschew thoughts of hell's torments for the much more pleasant view of heavenly rewards. However, there may be some value in considering eternal consequences of earthly decisions. Jonathan Edwards, the 18th century Puritan, saw great value in considering hell and divine wrath.

Thank You, Ma'am Introductory Paragraph Practice

Hook

Grab your reader's attention with an interesting idea.

It's the smallest actions which often create the largest change.

Bridge

Use a short sentence or even just a quick phrase (as I've done here) to link the hook idea to the specific literary work you'll discuss in the essay. Without this bridge, your introductory paragraph will feel choppy.

This paradox is explored in Langston Hughes' famous short story, "Thank You, Ma'am," as he introduces Mrs. Jones, a forceful, yet understanding working-class woman who helps Roger, a troubled teenager, choose a morally correct path. Early in the story, Roger tries unsuccessfully to swipe Mrs. Jones' purse as she wearily heads home after a long day of work. Instead of calling the police, Mrs. Jones brings the boy home to cook him a meal and, unknown to Roger at the time, change his life. Hughes uses the relationship between the unlikely pair to celebrate the massive power of minute acts of kindness.

Summary

You need to write a sentence or two summarizing elements of the story that will be important for readers to know as they work through your essay. Assume your reader does not know the original story you're discussing. You need to fill in the necessary story elements to help your reader understand the points you make in your essay.

Thesis

This single sentence clearly declares the topic of your essay. In this case, the thesis explains Hughes' theme. Be sure that the thesis is bold, compelling, and offers a position that could inspire two reasonable people to have an interesting debate.

Your Assignment:

Using the four elements shown here (hook, bridge, summary, and thesis), write an introductory paragraph of your own. Choose a different theme from Hughes' story and follow the pattern. Don't worry; you don't have to write the entire essay. You just need to write this one introductory paragraph.