

WRITING AN INTRODUCTION

The writer's introduction sets up the paper. It outlines what will be discussed and establishes any scenarios that need clarifying. It should capture the reader's attention while establishing your argument in the paper.

Here is a template to use when writing introductions.

The Rhetoric of Introductions¹

Introductions have four common elements:

1. A statement of the **status quo** or the state of affairs that gives rise to the problem. The status quo is not background information; instead, it is the statement of general interpretation of a text that most readers agree with, the idea you will argue against. Creating a status quo is an easy and useful way to prepare readers not only for your problem but for the discussion of the response to the problem.
2. A statement of the **problem** that complicates, challenges, destabilizes or disrupts status quo.
3. A statement of the **associated cost** of the problem (a statement of what's at stake or why the problem matters)--either the cost of leaving the problem unresolved or the benefit of resolving the problem.
4. A statement of the **response** to the problem. In an academic essay that deals with conceptual problems, the response is often the main claim.

The Cues for Rhetorical Elements of an Introduction

1. Most readers agree.....
2. However.....
3. This is important because.....
4. Thesis statement or main claim.....

¹ Writing principles originally from Joseph M. Williams & Gregory G. Colomb, *The Craft of Argument*, 3rd Ed, Longman, 2007. Modified by and taken from Karlyn Crowley, *Argument and Writing Handout*, "The Rhetoric of Introductions." Page 4.