

# Introductions

In our class, every essay that you write must begin with an introduction that presents an attention getter (one of the types listed below), a bridge (the transition between your attention getter and thesis), and a thesis statement.

## **ALERT. ALERT. ALERT.**

- Do not present any evidence or arguments to support your thesis in your introductory paragraph.
  - Do not list the reasons you plan to discuss in your essay.
  - If it is not on this list, it is not an acceptable type of introduction.

### ***The following are not acceptable:***

- Telling the reader to do something: “Imagine that you are a princess...”
- Using a fix-it in your attention getter: “There are millions of people in this world who have never tasted cotton candy.”  
“The feeling when your girlfriend dumps you is terrible.”
- Using any type of attention getter NOT LISTED on this sheet. Ask your teacher if you have questions!

## **Attention Getters**

**Narrative/Anecdote-** A short, interesting story that leads into your bridge/introduction. This could be a story about yourself or the topic at hand. It should be creative, have voice, and engage the reader’s interest.

**Cause-Effect/Problem-Solution-** If your essay will discuss the effects of a situation, you can describe the situation in your introduction. Alternately, if your essay will discuss the causes of a situation, your introduction can describe the effects. You must be careful not to provide evidence with this type of introduction, but if you write it well it can be powerful and highly effective.

**Definition-** If you are dealing with a topic whose exact meaning may be vague or easily confused, it is helpful to present the definition of terms as an attention step. ***Avoid defining a term that your audience most likely already knows. They might find your introduction boring, or even worse, insulting! That will have the opposite effect that an introduction should have.***

**Illustration-** While you may not provide evidence in your introduction, you can provide an example or illustration that you will **not** use in your essay.

**Statement of Opposing View-** An unusual technique for creating interest in a topic is to build up one side of a discussion or argument for the express purpose of having the thesis change to a contrasting view. While this type of introduction can be effective, be sure to avoid overstatements like “No one believes...”; instead use limiting words like “Some people believe that...”

**Pertinent Quotation-** If you happen across a quotation from an important authority or a famous personality, or a fragment of verse or prose which can be shown to be relevant to your thesis, take advantage of its inborn interest quality as an attention step. Remember to give credit to your source! However, avoid using quotations that are only vaguely linked to your topic. A quotation must be meaningful to be interesting, and it is your job as a writer to make sure the connection is clear.

**Comparison or Contrast-** In this type of introduction, the author either compares or contrasts a situation or idea to another situation or idea. For example, the author could use references to real or fictional people, events, or situations. Different techniques to compare or contrast could include allusions, similes, metaphors, or analogies.

**Startling Statistic-** If your essay is on a topic of current interest, provide shocking or surprising information to grab your reader’s attention. Remember to give credit to your source! Your statistic must be real and it must be meaningful.