

# Introductions

## ***What should a good introduction do?***

- Grab the reader's attention by providing a "hook": a story or anecdote, a question, or an example.
- Clearly state the topic.
- Provide some background on the topic.
- Include a **thesis statement**, often the last sentence, which states the topic and what you plan to say about it.

## ***What are some organizational options for effective introductions?***

- **Background Statement:** Background material or an overview of a subject provides readers the information they need to understand the rest of the discussion. Example of one sentence in the paragraph: *In the last two decades, American families seeking alternatives to public schools have asked the government to fund vouchers for private school fees.*
- **Questions:** An initial question attracts attention and creates interest. Example of one sentence in the paragraph: *Are tax-payer funded school vouchers for private school tuition the answer to poorly performing public schools?*
- **Quotation or Dialogue:** A relevant quotation or bit of dialogue can lend credibility and interest to your discussion and may help your readers to see your topic in concrete terms. Example of one sentence in the paragraph: *"Until I got a school voucher, my daughter was sentenced to a bad education just because of where we lived."*
- **Definition:** The definition of an important term or concept is especially useful in examinations and research papers. Example of one sentence in the paragraph: *According to the NEA, school vouchers are tax-payer funded, government certificates used by families to finance private school tuition.*
- **Refutation:** Disagreeing with a commonly held belief or idea, or refuting an important argument against your stand, may strengthen your position while also creating a context for your discussion. Example of one sentence in the paragraph: *Most people who favor school vouchers base their argument on the concept of freedom and choice, but rarely address the system's lack of accountability to the taxpayer.*
- **Anecdote:** A short personal narrative of an interesting, historic, or amusing biographical incident gives focus to your discussion and involves the reader at once. Example of one sentence in the paragraph: *One month before her 17-year-old daughter was due to graduate from a poorly performing public high school, Jill Lindsay discovered Shelly was reading at a third grade level.*
- **Direct Announcement:** Announce your thesis immediately and go right to the point in essay examinations, reports, and some short papers. Example of one sentence in the paragraph: *This report will demonstrate that school vouchers harm public schools by siphoning off needed funding and eroding educational standards.*

## ***Still stuck on the introduction?***

- Try writing the body of the paper first,
- Write a temporary introduction that you might improve or replace later.

## ***How well does the introduction work?***

- After you've finished a draft of the paper, read over the introduction again to see if it serves as a good preview for your paper.