

Writing an Introduction

DIRECTIONS: Now that you are familiar with the basics of plagiarism, using citations, and formatting your work, it is time to begin writing your introductory paragraph. For many, writing an introduction can be a challenge. Follow these simple steps to create an attention-grabbing introduction.

Your introduction should prepare readers for your essay by giving them the information they need to follow your discussion. For this reason, your introduction should include a thesis statement that presents the main idea of your essay, which usually appears at the end of the introductory paragraph.

Here are some ways to begin your introduction if you are stuck:

- _____ Begin with a general statement to introduce your topic.
- _____ Begin with a contradiction: start with a statement recognizing an opinion or approach that is opposite from the one you plan to take in your essay.
- _____ Begin with a short anecdote or narrative: if your story is interesting, it will draw readers in immediately. ***This is NOT a story about your own life... This is something from a news article or a well known event. REMEMBER: using first person is not an option for this essay.
- _____ Begin with an interesting fact or statistic: make sure this is powerful, as you will be including factual information in your essay.

Use the following checklist as you complete your introduction:

_____ 1. **A Powerful Beginning:** Begin with something that will catch your reader's attention (without confusing him/her). Your audience should be hooked at this point—they should want to continue reading.

_____ 2. **Purpose:** Make it evident that your essay is to inform the audience of your topic. Why should they care about your topic?

_____ 3. **Scope:** Briefly discuss the components you plan to discuss in your paper.

_____ 4. **Background Information:** Pretend as though the audience is not familiar with any aspect of your topic. What information is absolutely essential for them to know prior to reading the rest of your essay?

_____ 5. State your **thesis statement** or main purpose for writing your essay.

MLA FORMATTING EXAMPLE

Student Name

Instructor Name

Course Title

Day Month Year

Brain Development and Learning Styles

Research has proven that students in today's classrooms have varying levels of understanding based on their learning style. A learning style can be defined as the pedagogical method that best fits a student's learning approach. With these styles outlined, teachers are able to differentiate their lessons and create materials that appeal to all different types of learning. Based on their strengths, weaknesses, and preferences, students generally fit into one or two categories—and can greatly benefit from instruction that meets their needs. A student's brain development determines whether their learning style can be categorized as kinesthetic, visual, verbal, auditory, or social.

Students who prefer a more hands-on, interactive approach to learning are considered kinesthetic learners. Formally, a kinesthetic learner can be defined as “a learning style that requires a student to manipulate or touch material to learn. Kinesthetic-tactile techniques are used in combination with visual and/or auditory study techniques, producing multi-sensory learning” (Houghton). Furthermore, it is apparent to educators that this style of learner cannot learn as well by simply listening to a lecture or watching a demonstration; instead, the student prefers to be actively engaged and to learn by doing the task themselves. Typically, activities such as group work, drama presentation, recreational games, and project-based assessments will peak a kinesthetic learner's interest (Farwell). In a recent study conducted by Jarred Prince, it was discovered that on average, 30% of students are considered kinesthetic learners (Prince). Knowing this, teachers are able to develop a variety of interactive lesson plans that will allow kinesthetic learners to express their creativity by performing the task at hand. Ultimately, this style of learning is most successful when the student and the teacher both understand that in order to sustain their attention; the activities must reach the student on a more tactile level.

MLA **FORMATTING** GUIDELINES

MLA formatting:

- ✓ Times New Roman (size 12) font
- ✓ 1" margins
- ✓ A header with your name, your course name, your teacher's name, and the date (day, month, year)

COLOR-coded map key:

- ✓ The **red** represents the **thesis statement**. A thesis statement is a sentence, typically at the end of the introductory paragraph, that answers the question, "What is this paper about?"
- ✓ The **purple** represents a **topic sentence**. At the beginning of each of your subtopics, you should have a topic sentence that indirectly states what the paragraph will be about. TIP: the sentence does not say "This paragraph will be about..."
- ✓ The **orange** represents an **in-text citation**. An in-text citation gives credit to the author of the information, protects you from plagiarizing, and ensures that you have evidence to support your claims.
- ✓ The **blue** represents **a transition statement**. Transition statements introduce your direct quotes. EXAMPLE: research shows, studies prove, it is evident that...

In order to receive full credit on your essay, you need to include all of these components. Not only will they create a properly formatted essay, but they will also create flow to your essay.

EXAMPLE of in-text citation:

Formally, a kinesthetic learner can be defined as "a learning style that requires a student to manipulate or touch material to learn. Kinesthetic-tactile techniques are used in combination with visual and/or auditory study techniques, producing multi-sensory learning" **(Houghton)**.

TIP: The period goes AFTER the in-text citation. This shows that the entire sentence is related to that particular source.