**How to write an Introduction**

**Purpose of an introduction**

* Capture audience’s attention
* Give background on topic
* Develop interest in your topic
* Guide your reader to your thesis

**\*\*\*\*\*HINT \*\*\*\*\***

If you get stuck you might want to come back to your introduction. You can always write the introduction after you have written the other paragraphs of your paper. Or maybe you want to start with a sketch or outline of your introduction you can always come back and revise later.

When you start your introduction you need to get the reader’s attention – we call this a hook. You might want to try…

1. A quote – make it relevant
2. A shocking statistic
3. A reference to a current event
4. Tell an anecdote, story, or narrative
5. Begin with relevant background information
6. Begin with an analogy
7. Try making up relevant dialogue

In general, an outline of your introduction should look like this:

1. Start with an attention getter/hook
2. Make the connection between the attention getter and your paper this may take several sentences
3. End with your thesis

**Examples:**

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| **Using a Quotation** |
| The great United States poet, Maya Angelou, once said, “If you don’t like something, change it. If you can’t change it, change your attitude. Don’t complain.” Her words make a lot of sense to me as I think about the New Year’s resolutions I would like to make in 2012. Instead of complaining about things I don’t like, I’m going to try to make some changes. Three resolutions that I plan on keeping this year are to exercise regularly, to send Christmas cards, and to apply for technology grants. |
| **Using a Startling Fact or Statistic** |
| According to a new University of Washington survey, 63 percent of the people questioned were still keeping their number one New Year’s resolution after two months. That’s pretty encouraging to me, as I think about my New Year’s resolutions. If that many people can fulfill their promises to themselves, I’m confident that I can, too. The three resolutions that I plan on keeping in the year 2012 are to exercise regularly, send Christmas cards, and apply for technology grants. |
| **Using an Anecdote, Story, or Narrative** |
| I can remember the first time I learned about New Year’s resolutions. I made a list of about twenty changes I wanted to make in my life. Of course, the list was too long to remember, and the resolutions were too difficult to keep. I don’t think I ended up following a single one for more than a few days. Although I haven’t been very good at keeping my New Year’s resolutions in the past, this year I’m determined to follow through with my promises. Three resolutions that I plan on keeping this year are to exercise regularly, send Christmas cards, and apply for technology grants. |
| **Using Description** |
| It’s a few minutes before midnight. The party hats are on, the streamers are ready to fly, and the noisemakers are ready to be blown. Suddenly I’m filled with the overwhelming urge to make some New Year’s resolutions on anything from losing weight to keeping a journal to learning how to watercolor. I might even take a few seconds to write the resolutions down. Is it any wonder that such hastily thought-out resolutions are rarely kept? This year I’ve considered my goals very carefully. The three resolutions I plan on keeping are to exercise regularly, to send Christmas cards, and to apply for technology grants. |
| **Background Information (Story Summary for response to Literature essay)** |
| The main character in Harvey Swashbuckler’s short story “A New Leaf” is a young girl named Melanie. She lives in a small town in the middle of a cold and snowy Nebraska. The problem she faces is that she’s new to the town and her shyness is keeping her from making new friends. During the story, she meets an old lady in a nursing home who talks to her about her adventurous teen years. In the beginning of the story, Melanie is shy and fearful about getting to know the kids are her new school, but during the story she learns that she can’t let life pass her by, and she becomes more confident and outgoing. |
| **Using a Rhetorical Question** |
| Why is it so difficult to keep a New Year’s resolution? Could it be that we set unrealistic goals for ourselves? Or do we make our resolutions just before midnight without really thinking them over? Although I haven’t been very good at keeping my New Year’s resolutions in the past, this year I’m determined to follow through on my promises. Three resolutions that I plan on keeping are to exercise regularly, send Christmas cards, and apply for technology grants. |