

Writing an Introduction for a Research Paper

Function and Purpose

Introductions, well, introduce readers to the topic being discussed and give the writer an opportunity to explain

- a.) the topic about which they are writing
- b.) why they are writing about it
- c.) and enable readers, within a few words, to make a decision as to whether or not they wish to continue reading

But what should an introduction include exactly?

- General and background information about the topic
- Supporting information
- Filling and/or acknowledging a gap in knowledge or research
- Providing a definition of key terms
- Stating your purpose. That is, stating what you intend to do in the paper.
- Stating your position on the subject you are going to discuss (often called a thesis statement)
- A summary of the points you are going to cover
- Recognition of other researchers/writers who have written on the same topic.

Example of a quality introduction:

Despite the increased awareness of the problems of pollution in recent years, Britain continues to trail behind most of Western Europe in adopting stricter measures of control. While it is almost impossible to consider the problems of pollution with respect to one country in isolation, the most serious problems to affect Britain directly are probably those of industrial and nuclear waste, pesticides and car exhaust fumes. In what follows, each of these will be discussed together with their effects. Finally, it will be argued that to continue to ignore such problems is at the peril not only of Britain's environment but of the environment in general.

Provides general information

Provides adequate background information.

Statement of purpose

Clear thesis statement