

Developing Introductions

An introduction should do the following:

- Catch the reader's attention.
- Clearly introduce the topic.
- Identify the writer's thesis.

Note: Thesis statements in each example below are *italicized*.

Method 1: Refer to current events.

Example:

The cover story in the Laredo Morning Times reported that a family of seven, including a three-month-old infant, was killed when their minivan was struck head-on by a Ford Mustang. The driver of the Mustang was a sixteen-year-old male who had just received his license. *Because of an increase in fatal car accidents involving sixteen-year-olds, lawmakers should increase the age for granting a driver's license from 16 to 18.*

Method 2: Relate a story or personal anecdote.

Example:

I had not seen my older brother Carlos in three years. Right after graduating from Nixon High School, he went to study marine biology at a college in Florida, and he was finally coming home to spend the summer with me. Five miles north of Laredo, however, a sixteen-year-old girl driving her dad's Hummer lost control of the vehicle, veered across the median, and hit his car. The girl was fine; my brother died. *Because of an increase in fatal car accidents involving sixteen-year-olds, lawmakers should increase the age for granting a driver's license from 16 to 18.*

Method 3: Use an amusing, unexpected, or insightful quote.

Example:

"I'm all in favor of keeping dangerous weapons out of the hands of fools; let's start with cars," a state politician recently said according to *Texas Monthly*. Unfortunately, some teenagers don't realize that cars are more than just something to show off. Great responsibility comes with being behind the wheel; someone else's life or even their own is at stake. *Because of an increase in fatal car accidents involving sixteen-year-olds, lawmakers should increase the age for granting a driver's license from 16 to 18.*

Method 4: Make a startling statement.

Example:

When your son or daughter turns sixteen, don't forget to wrap up the perfect birthday present: a Glock 8mm handgun. This may seem outrageous, but according to DPS, handing the keys of a brand new car to an inexperienced driver may be as dangerous and deadly as giving a teen a firearm. *Because of an increase in fatal car accidents involving sixteen-year-olds, lawmakers should increase the age for granting a driver's license from 16 to 18.*

Method 5: Pose an unexpected, relevant question.

Example:

Could you live with yourself if you took the life of a human being because you were irresponsible or careless? Even with the fifteen- and seventeen-year-old demographic having the highest car-related mortality rate, many teenage drivers fail to think about this question before getting behind the wheel. *Because of an increase in fatal car accidents involving sixteen-year-olds, lawmakers should increase the age for granting a driver's license from 16 to 18.*

When writing an introduction...

- Avoiding boring the reader by starting with a dictionary definition.
- Don't introduce ideas that are off-topic *unless* you connect them to your paper's subject.
- Avoid listing points in your thesis that you don't address in body paragraphs.
- Avoid announcing what you're going to do, such as "In this paper I will..." or explain why you're writing about a specific subject: "As I was trying to think about an appropriate article for this assignment, I picked up this magazine and the image on the cover caught my eye."
- Avoid apologizing for your opinions.

Always...

- Use specific details.
- Use an attention-grabber or hook.
- Link the attention-grabber to the topic.
- Write a thesis that states your position on the topic.