**Lecture notes: The Introductory Paragraph**

It is one paragraph that introduces the topic to be discussed and the central idea of the essay.

The introductory paragraph contains the hook, relevant background information and the thesis statement.

**The Hook**

An essay's "hook" is something in the first paragraph--usually the first few sentences --that grabs the readers’ attention and makes him/her want to continue to read.

As a writer, your first priority is to make sure that you are keeping your audience in mind and writing for them and to them. That means grabbing and keeping their attention so that they want to read every word.

https://bid4papers.com/blog/hook-for-essay/

An anecdote, question, quotation, recent debate, timely news story, (a little known ) fact, description of a scene/phenomenon, a statement of opinion that you intend to challenge, definition, research findings or statistics can be compelling ways to begin an essay paper.

You can also introduce certain topics by comparing or contrasting 2 people, events, or ideas.

**Example hooks**

“A man’s errors are his portals (入口） of discovery.”

 Many studies show that the biological sleep pattern for teens shifts a few hours, which means teens naturally stay up later and feel alert later in the morning (Smith, 2013; Johnson, 2012; Brown, 2015).

According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, teens and young adults experience the highest rates of violent crime.

Many people think that writing is something that only those with a born talent can ever do well.

A cockroach can carry more than 40 different pathogens (病原体) that could spread to humans.

What would you do if you could play God for a day? That's exactly what the leaders of the tiny island nation of Guam tried to answer.

**The Thesis Statement**

The sentence containing the central idea is called the thesis statement.

The thesis statement consists of the topic and the controlling idea of the entire essay (the attitude, opinion, or idea about a topic). It should be the final sentence in the introductory paragraph.

**The Thesis Statement**

Students grow more confident and self-sufficient when parents allow them to make mistakes and experience failure.

If every school day started at ten o'clock, many students would find it easier to stay focused.

Parents are justified in implementing a strict curfew, regardless of a student's academic performance.

Although video games can be educational, parents should limit their children’s exposure to violent or addictive video games.

All students should study foreign languages from a young age, not only for the cross-cultural benefits of knowing a second language, but for the mental benefits as well.

Celebrities who break the law should be punished harshly, because they act as example citizens for the public and role models for the youth.

**Well-written Thesis**

Restricted: limits the essay to what can be discussed in detail in the space provided.

Unified: expresses only one central idea.

Precise/specific: stated so that it can have only one interpretation.

**A thesis statement….**

should be a complete sentence and not a question

\*e.g. My beautiful hometown

Have you been to Salt Lake City?

should express an opinion not a fact

\*e. g. A dollar equals 100 cents.

should be a statement that someone could disagree with

\*e. g. There are many advantages and disadvantages to studying abroad.

should express only one idea toward one topic

\*e.g. Young adults should be encouraged to live on their own and their parents should find some interesting things to do in their free time.

should not alienate the reader (make them feel unwilling to support you)

\*e. g. Only crazy people eat beef.

All foreigners are fat.

**Evaluating Thesis Statements**

Work with your partner and talk about whether the following thesis statements are strong enough. If not, how you should improve them.

1) There are some negative and positive aspects to the Banana Herb Tea Supplement.

Evaluating Thesis Statements

2) Companies need to exploit the marketing potential of the Internet, and web pages can provide both advertising and customer support.