



Mr. Taylor's Language Arts Class: **Notes on Writing an Introduction**

The introduction of your writing piece should be designed **to attract the reader's attention** and **give the reader an idea of the paper's focus**.

- Always begin your introduction with an attention grabber.
- A thesis statement [as known as your topic sentence] always has to be in your introduction.

The **thesis statement** is the sentence that contains the focus of your essay and tells your reader what the essay is going to be about.

**The attention grabber you use is up to you, but here are some ideas:**

**Startling information**

This information must be true but it doesn't need to be totally new to your readers. It could simply be a fact that is used to illustrate the point you wish to make. If you use a piece of startling information, be sure to follow it with a sentence or two to explain it [elaboration].

**Anecdote**

An *anecdote* is a story that illustrates a point. Be sure your anecdote is short, to the point, and is related to your topic. This can be a very effective opener for your writing piece.

**Dialogue**

An appropriate dialogue does not have to identify the speakers, but the reader must understand the point you are trying to make. Because this is an introduction, use only two or three exchanges between speakers to make your point. Be sure to follow dialogue with a sentence or two to explain it [elaboration].

**Ask a Question**

A question followed by a few sentences explaining your topic in **general** terms can lead the reader gently to your thesis. Each sentence should become gradually more specific, until you reach your thesis. Then, finish the paragraph with your thesis statement.

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**Here are four sample introductions from an essay**

[Thesis statement / topic sentence is in **bold print**]:

Many soldiers in medieval times used horses as weapons! Attackers would sometimes catapult the rotting corpse of a horse over the castle wall in hopes of spreading disease among the enemy. In a battle, any available object would do. This included rocks, branches, and even flaming arrows. **Medieval soldiers used many different methods to attack a castle.**

A long time ago, medieval soldiers had a unique way of fighting their enemy. They would sometimes catapult the rotting corpse of a horse over the castle wall in hopes of spreading disease among the enemy. In a battle, any available object would do. This included rocks, branches, and even flaming arrows. **Medieval soldiers used many different methods to attack a castle.**

"Ready?" a commander would ask a medieval war leader. "Ready when you are," would come the response. "Fire away!" Attackers would sometimes catapult the rotting corpse of a horse over the castle wall in hopes of spreading disease among the enemy. In a battle, any available object would do. This included rocks, branches, and even flaming arrows. **Medieval soldiers used many different methods to attack a castle.**

Have you ever seen a flying horse? Many soldiers in medieval times did. Attackers would sometimes catapult the rotting corpse of a horse over the castle wall in hopes of spreading disease among the enemy. In a battle, any available object would do. This included rocks, branches, and even flaming arrows. **Medieval soldiers used many different methods to attack a castle.**