
Writing an Introduction

An introduction is the first paragraph of your essay in which you introduce the subject of the essay and your main point about that subject (thesis statement). An introduction is brief and provides only the most necessary information needed to concisely understand the topic before reading the complete essay.

Elements of an Introduction:

1. **The opening sentence:** Your first sentence should spark your readers' intrigue and entice them to continue reading. Your first sentence should therefore be both **broad** and **attention-grabbing**. Use any of the following strategies:

Ask a thought-provoking question:

Is it possible that online shopping will overtake traditional, in-store shopping within our lifetime?

Provide a relevant and intriguing quotation, fact, or statistic:

In a 2012 New York Times article, Terry Lundgren, the CEO of Macy's Department Stores, stated that "Since the start of the twenty-first century, sixty-five percent of our sales from stores nation-wide have been made online rather than traditional in-store purchases."

Create a descriptive, fictional, relevant scenario:

If you are at the checkout in a store during the holiday season, waiting in a long line of impatient and grumpy shoppers, online shopping seems like the ideal alternative to avoid unnecessary stress and hassle.

2. **The body of the introduction:** Provide brief, basic, background information on your subject. This includes a description or explanation of the subject, mentioning any important people, dates, or events (such as an author or date of publication for a literary analysis essay or a biography).

At the start of the twenty-first century, online shopping has quickly become the chosen option over traditional shopping. Economically, this increase has allowed once-small websites and web-based businesses like Amazon.com to have the opportunity to grow into large companies that see extensive profits every year. For the consumer, the simple availability of products through websites from the comfort of their own home often makes going into stores less appealing. Consumers may also like the easiness of comparing various prices without having

to make multiple visits to different stores. Throughout the year, consumers make it abundantly clear that online shopping offers them preferred options that traditional shopping does not.

3. **Thesis statement:** Your thesis statement summarizes your main point of the essay—that is, what you are saying about the subject—and previews the supporting points you will be discussing. The thesis generally comes as the last sentence in your introduction, though it may also be placed first or in the body of the introduction, depending on your professor's requirements.

Thesis statement: Online shopping has become increasingly popular over traditional shopping in recent years because it is convenient, cheaper, and saves time.

In its completed form, your introduction would look like the following:

If you are at the checkout in a store during the holiday season, waiting in a long line of impatient and grumpy shoppers, online shopping seems like the ideal alternative to avoid unnecessary stress and hassle. At the start of the twenty-first century, online shopping has quickly become the chosen option over traditional shopping. Economically, this increase has allowed once-small websites and web-based businesses like Amazon.com to have the opportunity to grow into large companies that see extensive profits every year. For the consumer, the simple availability of products through websites from the comfort of their own home often makes going into stores less appealing. Consumers may also like the easiness of comparing various prices without having to make multiple visits to different stores. Throughout the year, consumers make it abundantly clear that online shopping offers them preferred options that traditional shopping does not. Online shopping has become increasingly popular over traditional shopping in recent years because it is convenient, cheaper, and saves time.

For more on introductions, visit:

University of North Carolina

<http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/introductions/>

University of Canberra

<http://www.canberra.edu.au/studyskills/writing/introductions>