

Aula 4

THE INTRODUCTORY PARAGRAPH (II)

META

This class aims at presenting the importance of a well-structured introductory paragraph.

OBJETIVOS

At the end of this class, it is expected that the students:
Improve their knowledge about introduction of an essay;
Recognise how the introduction is structured and the types of introduction;
Write clear and concise an introductory paragraph

PRÉ-REQUISITOS

Previous knowledge about paragraph structure and types of paragraphs.

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INTRODUÇÃO



Fonte: <https://theimpactnews.com>

Welcome to Class 4! In this unit, you will practise the introduction of an essay. When you are writing – a text message, an essay, an email, in other words, any written form of communication – you have to remember the four main elements: the writer (you!); the reader; the topic and the purpose.

The aforementioned aspects are crucial to an effective communication, because you have to *suit your writing to your audience as well as the purpose of that writing*.

Hence, let's focus on the introduction again and see how it is structured. These pieces of information will be important to your writing at the end of this class!

The Introductory Paragraph

An introductory paragraph has two parts, general statements and the thesis statement. **General statements**

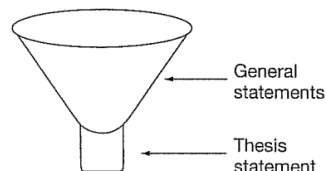
- introduce the general topic of the essay.
- capture the reader's interest.

The **thesis statement**

- states the specific topic.
- may list subtopics or subdivisions of the main topic or subtopics.
- may indicate the pattern of organization of the essay.
- is normally the last sentence in the introductory paragraph.

Funnel Introduction

The introductory paragraph of the model essay is a funnel introduction. This introduction is so called because it is shaped like a funnel—wide at the top and narrow at the bottom. It begins with one or two very general sentences about the topic. Each subsequent sentence becomes increasingly focused on the topic until the last sentence, which states very specifically what the essay will be about. Writing a funnel introduction is like focusing a camera with a telephoto lens. You start with a wide picture and gradually narrow the focus so that just one object appears in the camera's viewfinder: your thesis statement.



MODEL

Funnel Introduction

Moving to a new country can be an exciting, even exhilarating experience. In a new environment, you somehow feel more alive. Seeing new sights, eating new food, hearing the foreign sounds of a new language, and feeling a different climate against your skin stimulate your senses as never before. Soon, however, this sensory bombardment becomes sensory overload. Suddenly, new experiences seem stressful rather than stimulating, and delight turns into discomfort. This is the phenomenon known as culture shock. Culture shock is more than jet lag or homesickness, and it affects nearly everyone who enters a new culture—tourists, business travelers, diplomats, and students alike. Although not everyone experiences culture shock in exactly the same way, many experts agree that it has roughly five stages.

Attention-Getting Introduction

Other kinds of introductions are good for capturing your reader's attention.

MODEL

Dramatic, Interesting, or Funny Story

On November 14, 1963, a few miles off the southern coast of Iceland, the crew of a fishing boat noticed smoke on the horizon. Thinking that another fishing boat was on fire, they went to investigate. When they got closer, they discovered that the smoke was not from a boat on fire; rather, it was from an undersea volcano about to erupt. The next day, ash, cinders, and pumice were blown 1,000 feet into the air. The fishermen had witnessed a rare event—the violent birth of an island. The volcano continued to erupt for about four years, eventually creating an island about 1 square mile in area and 560 feet in height. The birth of Surtsey, as the island is named, offered scientists an extraordinary opportunity to learn how life takes hold on a sterile landmass.

MODEL

Surprising Statistics or Facts

Got high blood pressure? Try a truffle. Worried about heart disease? Buy a bon-bon. It's the best news in years! Studies in two prestigious scientific journals say dark chocolate is good for you. It seems that eating a small piece of dark chocolate regularly can reduce the risk of heart disease because dark chocolate—but not milk chocolate or white chocolate—contains high amounts of flavonoids, powerful cholesterol-fighting compounds. What is the next health food going to be? Ice cream? Sugar cookies? There are so many conflicting news stories about which foods are good for you that it is often difficult to make the right choices at the supermarket.

MODEL

Historical Background

The Pilgrims who arrived in Massachusetts in 1620 came to find religious freedom. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, large numbers of African men and women were brought as slaves to work on large plantations in the South. Immigrants from northern and southern Europe came in the early nineteenth century to escape poor economic conditions at home. Later in the nineteenth century, the first immigrants from China came as contract laborers to build the railroads connecting East and West. In the twentieth century, political and economic refugees arrived from Asia, Eastern Europe, and Latin America. Indeed, the United States has seen immigrants come from many different parts of the world, and they have come for many different reasons. Their ability to adjust to life in their adopted land has depended on several factors.

Writing Technique Questions

1. Underline the thesis statement in each example introductory paragraph.
2. In your opinion, which introduction captures the reader's interest the best? Why?

Source: OSHIMA, A.; HOGUE, A. *Writing Academic English*. 4th ed. White Plains, NY: Pearson Longman, 2006.

PRACTICE I

- Step 1** Read each of the following sets of sentences. When put in the correct order, they will form introductory paragraphs.
- Step 2** Write each paragraph, beginning with the most general statement first. Then add each sentence in the correct order until the introduction becomes more specific. Write the thesis statement last.
- Step 3** Identify the type of introduction (funnel, dramatic/interesting/funny story, surprising statistics, historical).

Paragraph 1

1. If done properly, a handshake gives the impression of strength and honesty, and if done improperly, it conveys weakness and dishonesty.
2. In some cultures, people bow, and in others, they shake hands.
3. In English-speaking countries, shaking hands is the custom.
4. A proper handshake has four ingredients: pressure, pumps,¹ eye contact, and verbal message.
5. The way people greet each other when they meet for the first time varies from culture to culture.
6. How one shakes hands sends an important message about one's character.

Type of introduction: _____

Paragraph 2

1. To celebrate the occasion, Mr. X decided to throw a big party at the plant.
2. Mr. X went to Mexico from England to manage a milk pasteurization plant.
3. Then one day an impressive new pasteurization unit arrived and was installed.
4. The employees did most of the planning and draped the new unit with garlands.
5. During the party one of Mr. X's supervisors took him aside and said, "Now we see that you are *buena gente*²; from now on I am sure everyone will really try to do their best for you."
6. And so it was—neither punctuality nor quality checks were any longer needed.
7. This story illustrates the need to understand that doing business in a different culture demands an understanding of the culture.
8. The party was a great success, and everybody had a good time.
9. For eight months, he tried every way possible to convince his workers of the importance of punctuality and of checking every detail of their work.
10. The response was always, "Yes, yes, we will do our best," but nothing ever changed.

Type of introduction: _____

¹**umps:** movements up and down

²**buena gente:** Spanish for "a good person"—someone you can trust and have as a friend

Introduction to an essay: example

Essay question: What is the importance of imitation in early child development?

Begin with a general point about the central issue

Imitation involves a sophisticated cognitive process. In the example of imitating adult facial expressions, an infant must recognise the facial expression, retain a representation of the expression in memory and then translate this abstract representation into action. The

Give an overview of the key issues involved in the topic

differing opinions that exist on when infants can imitate are therefore linked with differing theories of infant cognitive development. Because cognitive abilities in infants can only be inferred from behaviour, methodological limitations add further to the debate about when imitation occurs. When imitation is taken in a

Use the words of the essay title to show your understanding of the question

broader sense to include imitative behaviour from the caregiver, the importance of imitation in child development may be seen as playing a vital role in the formation of the infant's first relationships and earliest social skills. However, the role that imitation plays in early child development needs to be considered alongside other influences such as genetically predetermined factors, environmental factors and individual differences in temperament.

Indicate the direction your argument will take

Make a link to the first part of your essay

Source: <http://www2.le.ac.uk/offices/ld/resources/writing/diagnostic/p/pintrotoanessay>



Source: <https://billvan61.files.wordpress.com>

PRACTICE II

Select one topic from Praticce 1 – Prewriting Techniques (Class 2) and write an introductory paragraph related to it. Rewrite as many times as you want. Note: It is interesting to time how long you take to write a paragraph.

Peer feedback—paragraph

Writer's name:

Reader's name:

Assignment:

1. What is the topic of the paragraph? What is the main idea?
2. Does the paragraph have a topic sentence? If so, write it here.
3. Does each sentence support the topic sentence? If not, which sentence or sentences do not belong?
4. Does the paragraph have a concluding sentence? If so, does it restate the topic sentence or sum up the information?
5. Are there any places where the writer could add more details? Do you have any questions for the writer?
6. What are some good things about this paragraph?

Source: ZEMACH, Dorothy E.; RUMISEK, Lisa A. *Academic Writing: from Paragraph to essay*. Oxford: Macmillan Education, 2005, p. 123.

Discuss with your colleagues:
Which topic did you choose?
Why did you choose it?
How easy/hard was it? Why?



SUMMARY

In this class, you read about the types of introduction: funnel and attention-getting introductions (dramatic, surprising statistics or facts, historical background introduction). You can write them depending on the topic and the purpose of your writing, as well as your audience.

Besides, you wrote (and rewrote) the introduction of an essay as well as practised your critical viewpoint whilst reading someone else's text, which is a requirement for a future English teacher.

Finally, you discussed with your classmates on the writing process of an introduction. Therefore, we can move on to the body paragraphs, which will give support to what was presented in the introduction.



SELF-EVALUATION

Did I increase my knowledge related to Introductory Paragraph?
Have I consolidated the knowledge about Introductory Paragraph?



NEXT CLASS

Next class, the focus of your studies will be on Body Paragraphs. See ya ;)

REFERENCES

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