Introductions

An introduction engages your audience, gives context for your work, and includes your main idea or thesis statement. Make use of the principles provided in this handout, but remember to tailor your writing to your audience and assignment.

Engage Readers and Set the Tone

- **Capture your audience's interest**. This may require you to identify and research who your audience is so you can connect with them.

- **Consider what your audience already knows**. Is your information new to them, or is it a review?

- **Establish an appropriate tone** for your writing. For example, an academic paper will typically use a more formal tone while a blog post or magazine article might use a more casual tone. Read widely within your field to better understand the most suitable tone for your work.

Establish the Context for Your Work

- **Place your argument in the context of established knowledge**. To do this, research what others are saying on the topic, noting areas scholars may not have discussed that your work will address.

- **Provide a framework** for your ideas and engage your audience by including historical background, a relevant story or example, a poignant quote, a surprising statistic or piece of data, a quick overview of the topic, etc. Read within your field to determine what will be most appropriate for your audience.

- **Incorporate sources or examples if needed**, but make sure they do not overwhelm or distract readers from your own writing and ideas.

- **Define**, if necessary, any terms that are essential to your thesis or main idea.

Lead to the Main Idea or Thesis Statement

- **Build toward the thesis** or main idea of your work by starting with your general topic then narrowing down to your specific perspective or claim.

- **Incorporate only information that is relevant** to your main topic. Try writing an outline or draft of your entire paper before you begin your introduction to have a clear idea of the concepts you need to present. Revisit your introduction after you finish your work to make sure the introduction and thesis or main idea match the body and conclusion.

General Topic

Introduction

Specific Perspective