

INSTITUTE WRITING PROGRAM

THE WRITING CENTER

Four Part Introduction

A good introduction has four parts. This is not the only way to write an intro, but it is an efficient and effective way to do so. Assignments will ask you to do more than just gather information. They will require you to make an argument about the information—this is the thesis. You will have to convince your reader that your claim has merit, and must use evidence to prove your point. Before you start to write, read your assignment prompt carefully and figure out what argument you are asked to make.

PART I — Introduce the topic to your reader

Be kind to your reader and introduce them to the topic of your paper. Set the stage and give your reader enough information so that they can move into your argument with the basic facts. Focus on what is relevant to your own specific goals.

Do not make it too obvious and do not generalize or use clichés. You might as well say nothing. Do not discuss something irrelevant, like the nature of art, man’s desire to express himself, or that mankind has been fighting since the beginning of time. Your essay will not cover the breadth of these hypotheticals.

PART II — State your thesis

Make an argument—this is your thesis. It takes a debatable position of the facts, a position that is not obvious. Someone can disagree with this so you must prove it in your paper.

Do not choose a topic so straightforward that there is only one possible argument to make. You need to take a position that is one of several possibilities. Alternatively, do not make your thesis so controversial that it is absurd or idiosyncratic. You cannot ignore the facts of history and argue anything you like.

PART III — Present your evidence

State the main ideas that prove your argument. You will expand on these ideas with direct evidence and information in your body paragraphs. Facts must be structured in a way to make your argument hold water. This part of the paragraph is called the plan.

Don’t make a laundry list of topics and do not be vague. Do not start listing your facts here. Save it to use as evidence to prove your points.

PART IV — Explain the Significance

Briefly explain the significance of your thesis. You can expand on this idea in the conclusion. This gives more heft to your argument as it relates your thesis to the bigger picture to set it in a new context. It is the answer you get when you ask of your argument: so what? Your reader should think, “I see why this argument matters / is

Do not get too ambitious and make a claim too big to substantiate. Do not say something vague and mysterious.



A good example of an introduction with all four parts:

(part I) America experienced an industrial and commercial revolution in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Many artisans, such as Paul Revere, attempted to expand their operations to take advantage of new manufacturing techniques, widening markets, and increased consumerism.

(part II) Revere's successful transitions from silver working to iron casting to the rolling of copper sheets had a far greater historical impact than those of his peers because he alone served as a government contractor and benefited from industrial espionage. These controversial activities allowed him to overcome the capital and technological limitations that inhibited most other

American manufacturing endeavors. **(part III)** This essay will compare Revere's early work in silver to his later work in copper in order to demonstrate the practical, aesthetic and commercial advantages of the copperwork. **(part IV)** Ultimately, the evidence of Revere's combination of

craft and industrial methods indicates that we should date America's rise to modernity at an earlier point than previously suggested.

Write your introduction using the four part method: