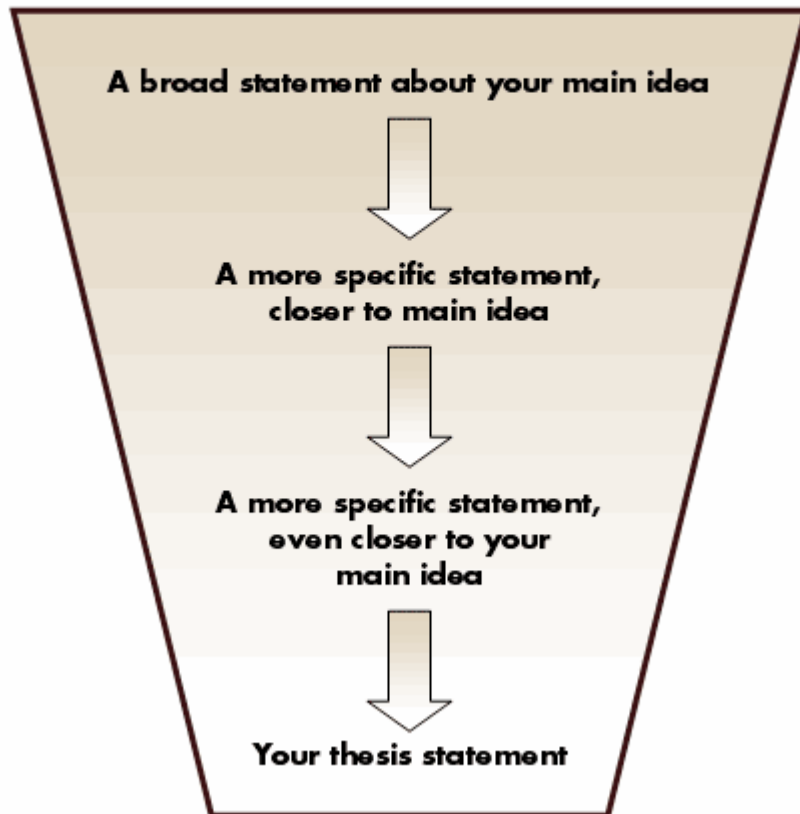


## Developing an Introduction: The Top-Down Model



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### What is an introduction?

An introduction is the first paragraph (or paragraphs) of any written work.

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### What is the function of an introduction?

An introduction

- captures your audience's attention.
- gives background on your topic.
- develops interest in your topic.
- guides your reader to your [thesis](#).

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## How can I write an introduction?

There are three basic ways to write an introduction:

1. You can write the introduction after you write the body of your essay.
2. You can write the introduction before you write the body of your essay.
3. You can rough out the introduction first and then focus and revise it once you have written your essay.

Many people write a rough draft and from that find out what their purpose really is and what they really believe. Then they revise the focus, language, or order of their introduction. This sequence -- of drafting an introduction and then revising and refining it once the body of the paper is sketched out -- is *very* common.

**None of the above situations is better!**

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## What goes on in an introduction?

There is no single right form for an introduction to take, but one common form that many writers use is the following:

- The introduction begins with a broad statement about the main idea. This statement might suggest background or the general category to which the thesis idea belongs.
  - The next sentences are more specific, moving closer to the actual thesis of the essay.
  - The final sentence of an introduction often contains a fairly specific version of the main idea; it is the [thesis statement](#).
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## Do all introductions have four sentences?

No, introductions can have a very few to many sentences, or even be more than one paragraph in length, depending on the length of your essay. In short, the actual number of sentences in an introduction is not important.