

MULTIPLE PARAGRAPH ESSAYS WRITING “INTRODUCTIONS”

I. Purpose

The purpose of the introduction paragraph in a multiple paragraph essay is to guide the reader in a desired direction. This paragraph is conceptually shaped as an upside down triangle because its subject matter begins “wide” and finishes “narrow.”

II. Key Terminology

1. Opening Statement – The first sentence of the introduction paragraph, which reveals a very “broad” subject area. It leaves the reader curiously asking, “Where is this going?”
2. Narrowing Sentences – Those sentences following the opening statement which help to narrow (or shape) the subject and precede the “elevator” sentence.
3. Elevator Sentence – This sentence “drops” or “lowers” the reader into the subject to be discussed. It is the first time this “key subject” has been mentioned.
4. Definition Sentence – This sentence defines a word or concept if it is not considered “common knowledge” (i.e. euthanasia).
5. Thesis Claim – This sentence reveals the exact focus of the essay and establishes the POWER LANGUAGE (key words) to be used in the topic claims and the closers. It reveals what the writer is trying to prove.

III. Examples

External conflict is something that has captured the focus of societies for generations (1). These conflicts may have taken the shape of a battle or a war between enemies (2). However, conflict can also come from within, as man has had to confront himself through his conscience (2). Unfortunately, these inner battles have often resulted in the most tragic of consequences such as suicide (3). Many people of all ages have used this “self destructive” method of taking their own lives as a solution to problems (4). It seems, however, that when young people die this way, the tragedy is greatly intensified (5). Although suicide rates among teenagers are rising, this act has many disadvantages for young people.

A basic desire, which drives most humans, is a quest for knowledge (1). Sometimes this desire to know allows people to “keep up” in an ever-changing world (2). In early times, school was used to teach the basics: reading, writing, and arithmetic (math) (2). Today, however, in addition to those basics, people must also learn modern technologies (2). In an effort to help people adapt to these technological changes, state governments have adopted laws of mandatory education (3). In most states, these laws require all children to attend school until the age of sixteen (4). Mandatory education is necessary to allow people to function effectively through the knowledge they gain (5).

IV. Length: These Intro paragraphs should be 5-7 sentences in length.