**Title**

How to Write Good Introductions

**Time**

50 minutes

**Setting**

The student population consists of 20 freshmen students in a moderate level English class. The breakdown of the students is as follows: 9 African American, 7 Caucasian, 2 Latino/a and 2 Asian American. Furthermore, there are 5 students requiring special accommodations: 2 students who have been diagnosed with ADHD, 1 student with progressive hearing loss, 1 student bilingual in English and Spanish and 1 Asian American student who is having some trouble with written English.

**Objective**

\*Students will recall prior encounters with writing introductions and they will be able to express their individual comfort level at being asked to approach the task again

\*Students will use information given during the presentation on writing good introductions to point out strengths and weakness of example introductions and to suggest improvements

\*Students will be able to rewrite a sample introduction and improve it using information learned on writing good introductions and their own previous suggestions of improvement

**Background**

Prior to this lesson, the students will have completed everything except the paper portion of the identity unit plan. Also, they will have been introduced to the paper assignment and its requirements. The lesson right before this one will deal with teaching students how to brainstorm paper ideas and approach the paper writing process, leading into the topic for this lesson: writing introductions.

**Materials**

\*Attendance sheet

\*PowerPoint on writing introductions

\*Projector

\*Projector screen

\*20 notes handouts on writing good introductions

\*20 editing introductions worksheets

**Preparation**

For this lesson I will create a PowerPoint presentation on writing good introductions, and make sure that the presentation and the projector are in working order. I will also make all necessary copies for the day’s activities before the start of class.

**Procedure**

1. Take attendance (1 minute)
2. Brainstorming discussion on writing introductions (2 minutes)

-ask students about their previous experience with writing introductions

1. PowerPoint presentation on writing good introductions (15 minutes)
2. Individual activity on editing introductions (10 minutes)

-give students a handout with a number of introductions and ask them what changes they would make to 3 example ones based on what they have just learned about writing good introductions

1. Whole class discussion of activity (5 minutes)

-ask students what changes they made to the 3 introductions

1. Partner activity on rewriting introductions (10 minutes)

-have students work with a partner to rewrite one of the introductions from the editing activity

1. Volunteers to read rewritten introductions (5 minutes)
2. Assign homework: introductions to their papers (1 minute)
3. Wrap-up, collect activities, and give students time to ask questions about their introductions (2 minutes)

**Discussion Ideas**

During lesson:

\*What is the purpose of an introduction?

\*Does every type of writing require an introduction?

\*How long should introductions be?

\*How much should you give away in your introduction?

After lesson:

\*What were some strengths and weaknesses of the introductions on the handout?

\*What are some changes you would make?

\*What is the most difficult aspect of writing introductions? How will you overcome that as you write the introductions to your papers?

\*Do you have any ideas for your introductions?

**Bilingual/ESL and Dialect Accommodations**

My bilingual student will need no accommodations for this lesson, since he is fluent in English and can understand and participate as well as the other students. However, I would still allow/encourage him to use Spanish in his paper, especially since it is an assignment on individual identity development.

For my student who is struggling with written English, I would provide her with detailed notes for this lesson, as well as supplemental handouts with clear examples of good and bad introductions. During the individual editing activity, I would give her a little more leading instructions, providing a few hints on how to approach the activity. I would also stay with her for most of the time when the other students did not have questions, monitoring her work and addressing her concerns. For the partner activity, I would pair her with a patient and knowledgeable student who would be able to serve as a good example. I would encourage her to write some of the introduction herself, with her partner double-checking her sentence construction and grammar.

**Special Education Accommodations**

To help my two students who have been diagnosed with ADHD focus better, I would allow them frequent breaks during class. To make these breaks less noticeable to other students, we have developed a system where if they are getting antsy and loosing focus they will give me a sign and I will have them take a “note” to the main office, get a drink of water, or go to the bathroom. Also, since this lesson is composed of a lot of short activities with many transitions, this should help them stay concentrated even better. To monitor them during the partner activity, I will make sure that each students is with a partner that will keep him on track and working, but who also understands when a break is needed.

To help my student with progressive hearing loss not lose her place during the lesson, I will always provide her with a detailed lesson overview and detailed handouts. I will also make sure that I am near her when giving important directions and that I am always facing forward when I speak (as opposed to facing the board or one side of the room). If a student says something important too softly, I will reiterate it louder, making sure I am near to her and that she can hear. I will also take notes on the board as students discuss various things, making sure I jot down the most important points so she can have a visual representation of them if she was not able to hear everything. For the partner activity, I will allow her and her partner to work in the hallway where it is quieter and it will be easier to hear one another.

**Assessment**

The majority of this lesson will be assessed using informal assessment techniques. This means making sure that students are paying attention and completing class work by scanning the room, using proximity control, walking around and making sure students are on task, asking students to reiterate certain points and monitoring classroom discussions/participation. If students are present and on task (paying attention, participating in discussion, and taking notes) they will receive all 10 participation point for the day. I will also collect the individual editing activity and the partner rewrite activity, grading them on completion and effort. As long as the student has thoroughly completed each activity, demonstrating obvious effort, she/he will receive the full 10 points (5 for each activity).

**Extension Ideas**

To extend this lesson, I may:

\*Have the students practice writing specific parts of an introduction (such as thesis statements)

\*Have the students bring their own introductions and do a peer editing activity in class

\*Have the whole class complete a poster board of hints on how to write good introductions and display it in the classroom

**Source of Activity**

This activity was created in-house by Marija Radovanovic with the help of the recourses and references listed below

**Resources and References**

<http://depts.gallaudet.edu/englishworks/writing/introconslu.html>

<http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/GRAMMAR/intros.htm>

<http://homeworktips.about.com/od/paperassignments/a/introsentence.htm>

<http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/introductions.html>

<http://www.writingcentre.ubc.ca/workshop/tools/intro_p.htm>

<http://www.isbe.net/ils/ela/standards.htm>

**Illinois State English Language Arts Goals and Learning Standards**

**3.A.4** Use standard English to edit docu­ments for clarity, subject/verb agreement, adverb and adjective agreement and verb tense; proofread for spelling, capitalization and punctuation; and ensure that documents are formatted in final form for submission and/or publication.

Students will be asked to edit and rewrite a sample introductory paragraph, using standard English and information presented on writing good introductions.

**3.B.4c** Evaluate written work for its effectiveness and make recommendations for its improvement.

Students will evaluate 3 sample introduction paragraphs for strengths and weakness, and will be asked to give suggestions on how to improve them.

**Reflection**

I think this is an important lesson for freshmen students, especially since they have had little experience writing papers with specific requirements. I wanted to give them a presentation on how to write good introductory paragraphs and then allow them plenty of time to practice what they have learned. Overall, this lesson fell into place really well. The only thing that I would do differently next time is allow the students more time with the activities, maybe extending this lesson to two days if we had enough time.

Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**A Guide to Writing Good Introductions**

1. The Role of Introductions

-

-

-act as roadmaps for the rest of the paper

2. Why Bother with a Good Introduction?

- You never get a second chance to make a first impression.

-Your introduction is an important road map for the rest of your paper.

-Ideally, your introduction will make your readers want to read your paper.

3. Writing a Good Introduction

-Thesis statement opening

-Opening with a story (anecdote)

-Specific detail opening

-Open with a quotation

-Open with an interesting statistic

-Question openings

4. Things to avoid

-

-

-

-

Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Editing Introductions**

**Below are a number of examples of introductory paragraphs. Pick 3 introductions to focus on. For each example: identify its strengths, weaknesses and the improvements you think are necessary to make it the best introduction possible.**

**Example 1:**

After searching vainly for a subject on which to write which would be related to the assignment, I came to the conclusion that everything I considered as a possible theme had been pretty well 'hashed over' in class. Therefore, I gave up and succumbed to a desire I've had since very early in this course--to write about my personal experience with pinball machines

**Example 2:**

Who am I? This question is quite a difficult problem to analyze, even though it looks quite simple at a glance....Not many students take the viewpoint that I take, so I shall try to give an analysis of myself

**Example 3:**

Down through history, from Eve to Joan of Arc, from Cleopatra to Eleanor Roosevelt, we find that women have provided inspiration for men and molded their lives, their efforts, and their destinies. For the love of women, men have robbed, murdered, pillaged, gained riches, and gained greatness

**Example 4:**

Have a minute? Good. Because that may be all it takes to save the life of a child –- your child.

Accidents kill nearly 8000 children under age 15 each year. And for every fatality,42 more children are admitted to hospitals for treatment. Yet such deaths and injuries can be avoided though these easy steps parents can take right now. You don’t have a minute to lose.

**Example 5:**

The number of cars that are mass produced today is astounding. More than 200 million are produced every year throughout the world. The number of automobiles that are owned by people in America is equally staggering. Over 100 million Americans own at least one automobile and over twenty million families in America own at least two.

**Example 6:**

Since the dawn of time, man has constantly enslaved animals on this planet. This must stop. Zoos should be abolished in 1999.