

## Introductory Strategies: Some Guidelines

### Selected Devices for Introductory Paragraphs:

1. Provide relevant background information.
2. Tell an interesting story or brief anecdote.
3. Give a pertinent statistic or statistics.
4. Ask a provocative question or questions.
5. Use an appropriate quotation.
6. Make a useful analogy.
7. Define a term used throughout the essay. Don't open with a dictionary definition of a term your audience already knows, though, unless you plan to disagree with the dictionary.

### What to Avoid in Introductory Paragraphs:

1. Don't be too obvious. Avoid statements such as "In this paper I will discuss the causes of falling oil prices" or "My assignment is to discuss Hamlet's inability to take action." This is referred to as "announcing your topic," and you want to avoid doing so. A well-written thesis statement should adequately inform your reader what you are going to discuss.
2. Don't apologize. Avoid self-critical statements such as "I do not have much background in this subject" or "I am not sure if I am right, but here is my opinion."
3. Don't use overworn expressions (clichés). Avoid statements such as "Haste makes waste," "A penny saved is a penny earned," or "War is hell."