

Analytical Expository Essay Outline

Writing Your Introduction

The introduction to an analytical/expository composition orients the reader to the writer's purpose and focus as well as indicates something about what the reader can expect to find in the remainder of the essay. Most introductions contain a thesis statement which communicates the point the writer intends to make -- although some writers may choose to let the reader infer what their thesis is or to include it at the end of the composition rather than at the beginning. There are many approaches one can use in writing an introduction. Several of these approaches are described for you below.

Generalization

One way to open a paper is to begin with a generalization about the topic at hand and, in the remainder of the essay, to qualify and support that generalization with specifics. Notice how this paper on birth order theory begins by offering a generalization about a topic and then supports that generalization with further details.

Thesis Statement

Many analytical/ expository compositions begin directly with the thesis statement. The thesis is the key proposition or argument to be supported, advanced or defended by the writer throughout the remainder of the paper.

Outline of Structure

Very often, introductions present the problem or topic to be discussed and then outline the structure of the essay to follow. Notice how this student combines descriptive language and dialogue to get the reader's attention, then presents the problem/ topic (a comparison/ contrast of two cars) and then outlines the structure of the essay to follow. As readers, we can and should anticipate that the writer's main body of the essay will cover all three subtopics thoroughly before arriving at a decision.

Quotation

Quotations from a book, song lyric, poem, etc., are often an attention-getting way of opening a paper. In the paper below, this student uses an especially appropriate

quotation from one author to introduce his generalization about the main characters in two other literary works.

Asking a Question

Opening a paper with a question is another good way to engage a reader's interest.

Narration

Very often narration can be used as a framing device for a piece of exposition. Some narrative techniques you might consider are anecdote, dialogue and interior monologue.