

Synthesizing Information (actual writing part)

Writing an Introduction

An effective initial paragraph:

- engages the reader (this is the hook)
- connects to the essential questions or thesis (this is the purpose of the paper)
- sets an expectation about what the paper will cover (this is the outline for the paper)

The Hook

Engaging the reader may be accomplished by using a hook. A hook can be a *descriptive statement* that uses descriptive language to bring the reader to a place to imagine the setting or the issue. Writers use descriptions of sights, sounds, smells, memories, etc. to do this. A hook could also be in the form of a *question*. This engages the reader to ponder exactly what the writer is wondering. The hook can also be a *provocative statement or data point* that sets up the dilemma being addressed.

Example of a hook (descriptive statement):

“At the Brookfield Zoo in Chicago, Illinois, a family of camels lives happily in their exhibit, but before Dr. Barbara Royal, an Alternative Medicine Veterinarian, began treatment, none of the camels were able to stand.”

Example of a hook (question):

“What is parkour? Is it a sport, a hobby, an art, or even a philosophy?”

Example of a hook (provocative statement or data point):

“City dwellers account for half of the world’s population, and the attraction toward city life isn’t expected to die down. The Massachusetts Institution of Technology predicts that two-thirds of the population will live in cities by 2050 (Karagianis).”

Essential Questions or Thesis

This is the purpose of your research or paper. This is either the questions you will be answering or the thesis or statement that you will be arguing. It is not necessary to actually write the words “the purpose of this paper...” While not wrong, you may simply eliminate those words as unnecessary and simply state your topic questions or statement.

Example:

“As the world continues to expand and create new cities, our health becomes more compromised.”

Example:

“The parkour community has differing opinions on how to best classify parkour. With such a split in the community it is hard to tell where the sport will and where it should go.”

An Expectations for What the Paper Covers

This is in essence the outline of your paper or the broad main points.

Example:

“In order to understand the relationship between urban planning and health one must know the science behind urban planning, the important history, and the solution to the current problem within cities today.”

Example:

“To help come to a decision, the history, the type of training, and how the sport [parkour] is expanding will be explored.”

Example:

“To understand the medical impacts of acupuncture and how it can replace traditional medical techniques, it is essential to understand how pain is perceived by the body, how acupuncture is performed, and how acupuncture effectively treats pain.”

Samples of complete introductory paragraphs, including a hook, the questions or thesis (purpose), and the outline of the paper.

Sample Paper #1: Using Urban Planning to Create Better Living Conditions²

City dwellers account for half of the world’s population, and the attraction toward city life isn’t expected to die down. The Massachusetts Institution of Technology predicts that two-thirds of the population will live in cities by 2050 (Karagianis). This means that not only are more people flocking to cities to find more opportunities and wealth, but also new cities are being built all over the world. Many developing companies are rushing to build the next big cities in Africa, but the need for speed might create a slippery slope that brings in sickness to these young urban areas. Michael Brauer, a professor at The University of British Columbia in Vancouver said, “Urban and transportation needs to become smarter designing cities for people, not just for cars,” (Ravilious). He explains further how disease can be traced to the lack of urban planning throughout cities all over the world. As the world continues to expand and create new cities, our health becomes more compromised. With the help of smart and environmentally aware urban planning, this global wide issue can be resolved. In order to understand the relationship between urban planning and health one must know the science behind urban planning, the important history, and the solution to the current problem within cities today.

Sample Paper #2: Can Parkour Jump Its Way Into the Olympics?³

What is parkour? Is it a sport, a hobby, an art, or even a philosophy? Parkour can be best defined as moving from point A to point B in the most efficient way possible. People use running, jumping, rolling, climbing, and acrobatics to accomplish this goal. The parkour community has several differing opinions on how best to classify parkour. Some people like Sam Sanders, a writer for NPR who is very connected to the parkour community, think it is a self challenge: “Me, I’m a short guy, 5 foot 6,” Sanders said. “If there was someone technically as apt as me, but they happen to be 6 foot 3, they’re gonna get up a higher wall. And if I gauge my worth on being able to get up the highest wall, I’m never gonna feel like I’m good for anything.” (Sanders). Some of the younger community members like Paul Krastsios would love to see parkour as a competition. He stated. “It makes sense. It’s not hard. You just set up a course, you can do it, like whoever does the fastest,” (Sanders). With such a split community, it is hard to tell where the sport will and where it should go.

¹ Excerpt taken from student paper, “Using Urban Planning to Create Better Living Conditions,” 2014. [need student name and permission to use]

² Excerpt taken from student paper, “Can Parkour Jump Its Way Into the Olympics?” 2014. [need student name Ben Logenbach and permission to use]

And then the very controversial questions: Should parkour become an Olympic event? To help come to a decision, the history, the type of training, and how the sport is expanding will be explored.

Sample Paper #3: Substituting Acupuncture for Traditional Veterinary Medical Techniques

At the Brookfield Zoo in Chicago, Illinois, a family of camels lives happily in their exhibit, but before Dr. Barbara Royal, an Alternative Medicine Veterinarian, began treatment none of the camels were able to stand. Camels are known for getting arthritis as they age, which can often lead to extreme pain and the inability to walk, but immediately after Dr. Royal began treatment, the camels stood up, and have remained healthy since. It is easy to guess that extensive and expensive surgery and rugs were used to treat the camels, but Dr. Royal's only treatment was acupuncture, an alternative medical technique ("Claws"). Alternative medicine can be defined as "medical and therapeutic techniques, practices, and beliefs that have not been proven by scientific method," are not taught in medical school, and are rarely covered by healthcare (Blaser). Acupuncture is one of the most well-known, yet least understood alternative medical techniques. It is stereotypically thought of as a man lying on a table with thousands of giant needles randomly stabbed into him. With this picture, in mind, it is hard to imagine that acupuncture can reduce pain, inflammation, and nausea, as well as improve many other aspects of health. Fortunately, a normal acupuncture treatment consists of only twenty to thirty needles. However taking the maximum dose of Advil every four to six hours may still seem like a better option, so why do patients choose acupuncture? To understand the medical impacts of acupuncture and how it can replace traditional medical techniques, it is essential to understand how pain is perceived by the body, how acupuncture is performed, and how acupuncture effectively treats pain.