

Introductions with Criteria

When someone begins reading your essay, they come from a big, noisy, distraction-filled place called The World. Your job in your introduction is to take that reader and convince them to ignore The World and instead focus on your Thesis Statement.



How do you take your reader by the hand and lead them from The World to your Thesis Statement?

#1 You start with meeting them in the world by explaining what is the common opinion in the world about your topic. If your topic is poetry, you could say:

- The average American reader of poetry looks for poems that provide emotional insight. OR
- Many modern day readers of poems want poetry to help them explain their most difficult emotions.

#2 Next, you introduce a few specific viewpoints in the world about your topic. At this point, you are narrowing down your reader's focus so that you can deliver your very specific thesis statement. You might add some of the viewpoints of your classmates:

- Some readers want poems that have emotional power with closure. Others turn to poetry for lyrical beauty.

#3 Finally, you want to present your criteria for this topic as a thesis statement. You might say:

- I maintain that the best poems embody my aesthetic criteria of verbal play and determinable meaning.



Tip: Once you have your criteria in your thesis statement, all of the evidence that you present in your body paragraphs can support that criteria. Just keep connecting back all of your evidence to the criteria in your thesis statement.