

## Sample Introductory Paragraph

My name is James Armistead Lafayette, and even though I am a slave, I play an important role in the American Revolution as a spy for the Patriots. Born as a slave in New Kent, Virginia, I do not know the exact date of my birth, but my master William Armistead estimates my birthday is December 10, 1748. In 1781, my master allows me to volunteer to join the American Continental Army to help the Patriots. The army assigns me to General Marquis de Lafayette's troops, and Lafayette thinks I would make a great spy. Actually, I become a double agent. Pretending to be a runaway slave, I become acquainted with British General George Cornwallis and General Benedict Arnold, who believe I could help their army by spying on the Americans. I move easily between the two army camps, gathering intelligence for Lafayette and telling Cornwallis incorrect information about the size of the Patriots' army. In particular, my intelligence helps the Americans win the Battle of Yorktown, which is the last key battle of the American Revolution. Because of my reports, Generals George Washington and Lafayette surprise the British forces at Yorktown, where the British are expecting 10,000 reinforcements. They surround the British and trap them, forcing the British to surrender three weeks later. After the war, I return to my master's home, still a slave. In 1783, the government frees all slaves who have been soldiers during the revolution; however, since I am a spy, I do not qualify. Lafayette considers this unfair, and in 1784, he writes a recommendation for my freedom based on my important service during the war, but the Virginia legislature does not act on this recommendation until 1787. To show my gratitude to General Lafayette, I take his last name. Until my death on August 9, 1830, I work as a farmer on my own land. In conclusion, my actions are significant in defeating the British. Just as I gain my own freedom, so does the United States because of my contributions.