

How Do I Start My Essay?

- ❑ 1. Even though your thesis or claim is the LAST sentence in your first paragraph (called the introduction), you need to write this sentence first. You cannot start your essay unless you know where you are headed and what you are trying to prove.
- ❑ 2. You want your attention getter (the first 2-4 sentences of your essay) to connect to what most of your essay is about – your thesis. Review your thesis, and **identify the topics** it deals with.
- ❑ 3. Now you can write your attention getter. Think about HOW the message and topics you are writing about connect to the world, society and you individually and use these ideas to start your essay! Here are some ideas . . .

Begin with a short personal story

Apply the topics and theme to your own experiences. Describe a time in your life or someone you know that shows the theme or message you are writing about.

- When I was . . .
- I will never forget the time when . . .

A personal observation about the world

- All around me, I have noticed that when . . .

Important lessons taught to you by your parents, a teacher, coach, grandparent, etc.

- Growing up, I was always told . . .
- Whenever I would . . . , my father, mother, grandmother, 4th grade teacher, etc. would tell me . . .

Define what your topic means by describing the denotation, connotations and / or an example of what it means in real life (What does it mean to belong? What does it mean to be a family?)

- (Topic here – responsibility, belonging, etc) often brings to mind . . . The real test of topic here is when (describe a realistic example of how you might show what this idea really means).
- According to Name of Source, word here means definition here.

Discuss a famous person

- Celebrated author, actor, athlete, musician,,. etc. name of person here, is most known for _____.

Describe a historical or current event

- On date here, when describe what was going on in the world, identify what happened
- The day that (describe what occurred) will live in many people's memories forever.
- Recently in the news, _____

Startling fact or statistic

- Many people would be shocked to learn that _____ (*Name of Source*).

Famous quote or saying & your reaction or how it applies to you

- There is a famous saying that _____
- (Actor, Celebrity, Olympic Champion, Musician, Poet, President, Civil Rights Leader, etc.) Name, once said, "Quote here." The idea that _____ is one I have often found to be true when _____.

Ask & Answer a Question

Sample Introductions

Attention Getter: I still remember my first car. It was a complete jalopy – an old post office truck with the driver's wheel on the right side. I had to use a wrench to shift gears and there was no back seat. But it ran and the freedom it gave me made me love it especially when I left home to go to college in it. **Hook** (connect your attention getter to the text): In *The Bean Trees* by Barbara Kingsolver, the main character, Taylor, also gains freedom with her first car because it is what allows her to leave her hometown of Pittman County and start a new life for herself. **Short Summary of the Book:** This story is about ... (no more than 1-2 sentences). **Thesis:** The reoccurring motif of cars is used in *The Bean Trees* to convey the message that with determination, we have the freedom to start over and change our lives and even who we are.

Attention Getter: It seems like every time we turn on the news there is some recent story about violence whether it be a shooting on the street or bullying in a school that has resulted in terrible tragedy. Yet much of this violence wouldn't exist if we as a society embraced the concept that it is our responsibility to help others and to never turn a blind eye to suffering. **Hook** (connect your attention getter to the text): In *The Bean Trees* by Barbara Kingsolver, the narrator, Taylor Greer, moves from being blind to seeing, not because she is literally blind, but because most of her life, she has been unaware of the suffering that exists in this world. It isn't until she begins opening her eyes that she realizes she needs to do something about it. **Short Summary of the Book:** This story is about ... (no more than 1-2 sentences). **Thesis:** Kingsolver uses the motif of cars to show that we have a responsibility to help those in need and those connections will be the ones that give us the most joy in life.