

VARIOUS TYPES OF INTRODUCTIONS

These examples are from a personal essay. Be sure to adjust your language and tone given your essay's audience and purpose.

1. *Begin with a **general subject** that can be narrowed down into the specific topic of the essay.*

Students face all kinds of problems when they start college. Some students struggle with a lack of basic math skills; others have never learned how to write a term paper. Students who were stars in high school have to cope with being just another number in the student population. Students with children have to find a way to be good parents and good students, too. Although all of these problems are common, I found an even more typical conflict. My biggest problem in college was learning to organize my time.

2. *Begin with a **quotation** (not necessarily from a famous person) that leads into your topic.*

Everybody has heard the old saying, "Time flies," but I never really thought about that statement until I started college. I expected college to challenge me with demanding course work. I expected it to surprise me with the wide range of people I would meet. I expected it to excite me with the fun and intrigue of dating and romance. But I never expected college to exhaust me. I was surprised to discover that my biggest problem in college was learning to organize my time.

3. *Begin with a **story** that leads into your topic. This could be a personal anecdote told in first person, or even a fictional anecdote told in third person.*

My friend Phyllis is two years older than I am, so she started college before I did. When Phyllis came home from college for the Thanksgiving holidays, I had a long list of activities planned for her to enjoy. I was surprised when Phyllis wanted to sleep late every day. I did not understand when she told me she was worn out. However, when I started college myself, I understood her perfectly. Phyllis was a victim of an old college ailment: not knowing how to handle time. When I started to college, I developed the same problem; I had to learn how to organize my time.

4. *Begin by explaining why this topic is **important**.*

I dozed off during most of my freshman orientation, and now I wish I had paid attention. I am sure somebody somewhere warned me about the problems I would face in college. I am sure somebody talked about getting organized. Unfortunately, I did not listen, and I had to learn the hard way. I hope other students will listen and learn from my mistake. My biggest problem in college was learning to organize my time.

5. *Begin by raising a **question** (or several questions) to lead into your topic.*

Does the clock ever seem to tick faster when there is a pressing deadline in front of you? Hurrying through each second, every click a reminder that you, once again, procrastinated. If so, you may be the same kind of college student I was. This kind of student always runs into class three minutes late, begs for an extension on the term paper, and pleads with the teacher to postpone the test. I just could not get things done on schedule. My biggest problem in college was learning to organize my time. **Avoid questions that begin... "Have you ever...?"**

Other possibilities:

6. Create an **analogy or metaphor**.
7. Give background information, particularly **facts and statistics**.
8. Present a **common perception or stereotype** and then challenge it with your thesis statement.
9. **Begin with a definition.** (never do this)