

Writing the Introductory Paragraph

Step 1: Identifying the general topic

Step 2: Introducing the material

Step 3: Writing a claim (thesis)

Some General Rules...

- **The steps for an introductory are the same for nearly all kinds of essays.**
- An introduction needs to be a complete paragraph- **at least 5 sentences**
- Introductions begin by discussing the essay topic in the most general way- **at least 3 sentences.**
- You must introduce the work (articles, play, novel, ect.) and author you are discussing- **1 sentence.**
- The last sentence is your **claim.**

Step 1: Identifying the General Topic

The first thing you need to do is identify the general topic in the essay prompt.

Look at the essay prompt on the next page and in one word, answer the following question...

What is the general topic?

Essay Prompt

Using the three articles provided write an informational essay on the American Dream. Your essay should discuss what the American Dream is and explore whether or not it is a reasonable concept in which to believe. You must also present and refute an opposing claim. Your essay must be based on ideas, concepts, and information from the passage set.

One Word:

What is the General Topic?

- In one word, the topic of this essay is?
- Addressing this prompt successfully requires you to...

Step One: Introducing the Topic

- Think what the American Dream is.
- How does it show up in the articles you have read?
- How does it affect people.
- Having given the function of the American Dream some thought, write three good sentences about it.

Step 1: Example

The American Dream is a part of the American experience. This dream has inspired people from across the globe to immigrate to the United States. It is the possibility of achieving this dream that has separated America from the rest of the world.

Essay Prompt

In some works of literature, childhood and adolescence are portrayed as times graced by innocence and a sense of wonder; in other works they are depicted as times of tribulation and terror. Write a well-organized essay that analyzes how *The House on Mango Street* represents childhood or adolescence and why that representation is significant to the work.

One Word:

What is the General Topic?

- In one word, the topic of this essay is?
- Addressing this prompt successfully requires you to...

Step One: Introducing the Topic

- Think about how childhood and adolescence usually work in literature.
- How does the author use it in the work you are discussing?
- Having given the function of childhood/adolescence some thought, write three good sentences about its purpose in literature.

Step One Example:

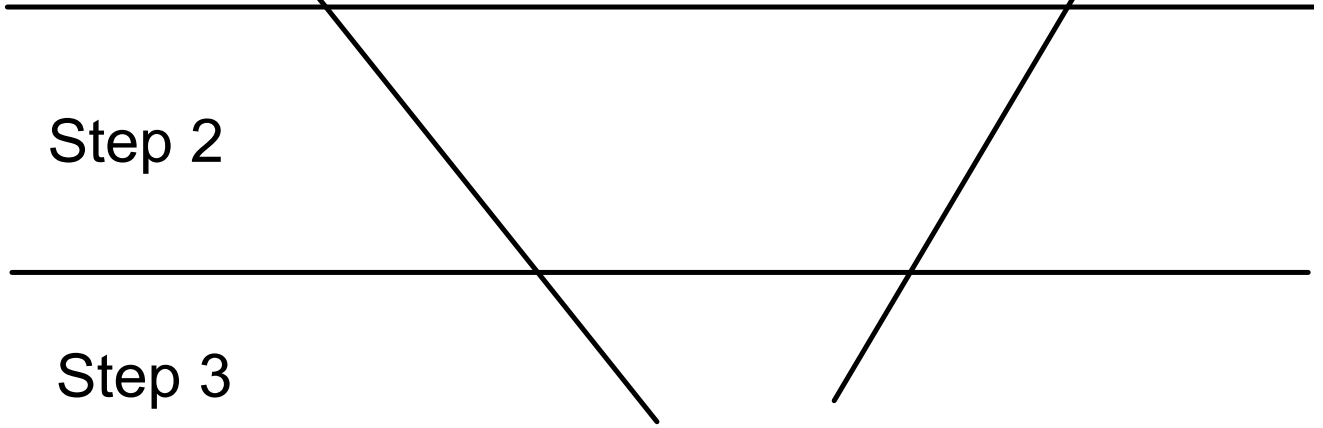
The sweet innocence of childhood is a beautiful and delicate thing. Some kids may have a childhood full of happiness while others face pain and sorrow, but in most cases childhood is a combination of the two. In some literary works with a child as a main character the reader can witness the moments of happiness and sadness experienced, and they can see how these experiences transform the main character.

Step 1

At least 3 general sentences about
the prompt's topic

Step 2

Step 3



Some Important Points...

- Notice that the title of the book does NOT appear in the first sentence.
- All of what is here is the writer's **opinion**. The sentences actually say something, they don't just babble

Step Two: Introducing the Work and Author

- Now that you have addressed the topic of the prompt, you are ready to introduce both the author and the work you are discussing.
- This should be done at this point in the paragraph and nowhere else!
- One sentence should do it.

Step Two Example:

This is the case in Sandra Cisneros' novel *The House on Mango Street*.

Or

An example of a careful use of adolescence is *The House on Mango Street* by Sandra Cisneros.

Step Two Example:

The American Dream is explored in the articles "Upward Mobility", "It's Now the Canadian Dream", and "Price Tag for the American Dream: \$130K a Year".

Or

The American Dream is a topic often explored in the media as seen in the articles "Upward Mobility", "It's Now the Canadian Dream", and "Price Tag for the American Dream: \$130K a Year".

Adding the Two Steps:

The sweet innocence of childhood is a beautiful and delicate thing. Some kids may have a childhood full of happiness while others face pain and sorrow, but in most cases childhood is a combination of the two. In some literary works with a child as a main character the reader can witness the moments of happiness and sadness experienced, and they can see how these experiences transform the main character. **In Sandra Cisneros' *The House on Mango Street* the main character Esperanza experiences both happy and sad times during her childhood.**

Adding the Two Steps:

The American Dream is a part of the American experience. This dream has inspired people from across the globe to immigrate to the United States. It is the possibility of achieving this dream that has separated America from the rest of the world. The American Dream is explored in the articles "Upward Mobility", "It's Now the Canadian Dream", and "Price Tag for the American Dream: \$130K a Year".

Step 1 At least 3 general sentences about the prompt's topic

Step 2 1 Sentence that introduces the author and work

Step 3

Step Three: The Claim/Thesis Sentence

- Your claim should be the last sentence in your introductory paragraph.
- Your claim is your point, your "answer" to the essay prompt.
- It should be one declarative sentence, that "answers" the prompt with your opinion.
- A claim is subject + opinion + reasons

(continued)

- Your claim is the most significant sentence in the entire essay.
- It is the point you are proving.
- You must make this sentence count!

An Effective Claim Will "Answer" All Parts of the Prompt

Using the three articles provided write an informational essay on the American Dream. Your essay should discuss what the American Dream is and explore whether or not it is a reasonable concept in which to believe. You must also present and refute an opposing claim. Your essay must be based on ideas, concepts, and information from the passage set.

or

In some works of literature, childhood and adolescence are portrayed as times graced by innocence and a sense of wonder; in other works they are depicted as times of tribulation and terror. Write a well-organized essay that analyzes how *The House on Mango Street* represents childhood or adolescence and why that representation is significant to the work.

An Effective Claim Will "Answer" All Parts of the Prompt

1. What is the American Dream?

2. Is it reasonable to believe in American Dream?

An Effective Claim Will "Answer" All Parts of the Prompt

1. How is childhood/adolescence represented in book?
2. Why is that representation significant to book?

Step Three Example

Prompt 1: The American Dream is the belief that with hard work, determination, and sacrifice a person can achieve material success. The success that a person can achieve is financial security, a home, a car, and the promise that children will have a better life than their parents. It is no longer available to the masses because of inequality and education, but people should still believe in it because it helps them achieve more than otherwise.

Prompt 2: Cisneros shows that Esperanza's childhood was both a time of joy and sorrow, that those experiences made her who she is, and helped her achieve her dream of owning her own house.

Step 1

At least 3 general sentences about the prompt's topic

Step 2

1 Sentence that introduces the author and work

Step 3

1 Declarative sentence that is your answer to the prompt. A claim is subject + opinion+reasons. It is the point you are trying to prove.

Note the following:

There is not one right
answer to the prompt.

The Final Product

The American Dream is a part of the American experience. This dream has inspired people from across the globe to immigrate to the United States. It is the possibility of achieving this dream that has separated America from the rest of the world. The American Dream is explored in the articles "Upward Mobility", "It's Now the Canadian Dream", and "Price Tag for the American Dream: \$130K a Year". The American Dream is the belief that with hard work, determination, and sacrifice a person can achieve material success. The success that a person can achieve is financial security, a home, a car, and the promise that children will have a better life than their parents. It is no longer available to the masses because of inequality and education, but people should still believe in it because it helps them achieve more than otherwise.

The Final Product

The sweet innocence of childhood is a beautiful and delicate thing. Some kids may have a childhood full of happiness while others face pain and sorrow, but in most cases childhood is a combination of the two. In some literary works with a child as a main character the reader can witness the moments of happiness and sadness experienced, and they can see how these experiences transform the main character. In Sandra Cisneros' *The House on Mango Street* the main character Esperanza experiences both happy and sad times during her childhood. Cisneros shows that Esperanza's childhood was both a time of joy and sorrow, that those experiences made her who she is, and helped her achieve her dream of owning her own house.

Step 1

At least 3 general sentences about the prompt's topic

Step 2

1 Sentence that introduces the author and work

Step 3

1 Declarative sentence that is your answer to the prompt. A claim is subject + opinion+reasons. It is the point you are trying to prove.

Summary

- A properly constructed essay introduction identifies the writer's point.
- It structures the essay for the reader in advance.
- It contains a claim which is the guiding and governing idea for the whole essay.

