INTRODUCTORY PARAGRAPHS

Good introductory paragraphs generally contain three main components: a hook, a transition, and a thesis.

Writing a Hook:
The primary function of a hook is to successfully engage your reader so that he/she will continue to read the entirety of your paper.

- Startling Statistic: Just under 40% of high school students in the U.S. report having used marijuana at least once.
- Narrative: “I got our drinks and sat down on the sofa with him. Then I rolled us two fat numbers. I lit one and passed it. I brought it to his fingers. He took it and inhaled” (from Raymond’s Carver’s “Cathedral”).
- Quote: Dr. Sanjay Gupta once said, “For 3,000 years marijuana was a legitimate medication.”
- Philosophical Statement: In a country of diverse freedoms, it seems counterintuitive that people with grave illnesses would be legally prohibited from their right to all forms of medical treatment.

No matter which style of hook you choose to use, make sure to take your audience into consideration. For example, a grandiose, philosophical statement would be more appropriate in a humanities paper than a scientific one.

Writing a Transition:
After you’ve composed your hook, it’s important to logically connect it to your thesis. However, it is also important to remember that this is simply your introduction. There shouldn’t be massive amounts of background information or analysis.

Writing a Thesis:
Thesis statements have three requirements. They must be a statement, address a controversial topic, and contain an opinion. Your thesis statement is going to act as a guide for the rest of your paper. Every paragraph after your introductory paragraph should be able to be tied directly back to your thesis. For more help on theses, check out our “Thesis Statements” handout.

General to Specific:
While containing the above-mentioned three requirements, introductions can also be seen as funnels streamlining readers into the paper. In order to accomplish this, construct your introduction to move from general background information to a clear, specific thesis.