Why bother crafting a good introduction? Perhaps it is true that you may not get a second chance to make a first impression, but an introduction can go through several drafts until the right “fit” is discovered. Should you start with an anecdote? A startling fact? An interesting quote? There are many ways to begin your beginning, but a vague, disorganized, or boring introduction will probably create a negative impression and may lead your readers astray. Conversely, an effective introduction will provide readers with a sense of where the paper is going and help them feel compelled to continue reading. Here are a few helpful hints to get started crafting your introduction:

• Begin with a quotation. Although this approach can be overused, an appropriate quote can provide just the right provocative “punch.” However, if a fitting quotation isn’t available, consider another method to begin the paper. Example:

  Gene Fowler wrote, "Writing is easy. All you do is stare at a blank sheet of paper until drops of blood form on your forehead." Fowler’s statement may accurately describe what some may feel when getting started on a writing assignment, but drafting an introduction to a paper isn’t as difficult as it may first appear.

  • Begin with a short story or anecdote. A vivid or unexpected anecdote can grab your readers’ attention and provide a way for you to connect with your audience.

Example:

When I had to write my first paper for graduate school, I remember staring at my blank computer screen for about 4 hours. I felt petrified by the lack of free-flowing ideas for my introduction. Then, it hit me: all I had to do was just start typing my main ideas. Once I had some content and ideas on the screen, I could fashion an introduction because I finally had something that needed an introduction. I learned that writing the introduction was easier for my writing process. Starting by focusing on the main content of the paper was easier than trying to start with an introductory paragraph.

  • Begin with a creative analogy that compares your topic to some other concept or image. Example:

    Like a roadmap for a foreign land, an introduction can provide readers a way through your ideas in your paper, providing for them a sense of the kind of information and the
When most people think of tongue twisters a childhood image comes to mind: Attempting to recite a tricky rhyme or phrase as fast as possible without tripping over the verbal challenges and hurdles lurking within these tongue-tying sentences, such as Peter Piper Picked A Peck of Pickled Peppers.

By combining the effects of alliteration (repetition of a sound), particularly of similar but not identical sounds, with a phrase designed such that it is made very easy to slip accidentally, these sentences and poems can be guaranteed to provide us with lots of fun and laughter.

But tongue twisters are not only for light-hearted linguistic fun and games. They serve a practical purpose in practicing pronunciation. English tongue twisters may be used by foreign students of English to improve their accent, actors who need to develop a certain accent, and by speech therapists to help those with speech difficulties.

Try reading these out loud.

**Stump the Grammar Goddess**

**Dear Grammar Goddess:**

In my last rough draft, my teacher indicated that the following sentence was incorrect. I’ve showed it to all my friends and we can’t figure out what’s wrong with it!

"The reason they were so eager to sell tickets is because they're trying to refurbish the old fieldhouse."

**Help!**

-- Puzzled in Gilbert

**Dear Puzzled:**

The phrases "the reason is because" and "the reason why is because" have crept into our language in spite of their inherent redundancy. The word reason means why or because, so to create a subject-predicate equation in which the subject means the same thing as itself is redundant. Think "the reason that" and the problem is solved!

“They reason they were so eager to sell tickets is that they're trying to refurbish the old field house” or “They were so eager to sell tickets because they're trying to refurbish the old field house.”

Mere mortals can address the Grammar Goddess with questions by emailing her at dl-cgc-grammargoddess@cgcmail.maricopa.edu. Not all questions will be answered; if you need specific help, please stop by the Writing Center.

"You know...that a blank wall is an appalling thing to look at. The wall of a museum - a canvas - a piece of film - or a guy sitting in front of a typewriter. Then, you start out to do something - that vague thing called creation. The beginning strikes awe within you."

-Edward Steichen, Wisdom

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**IMPRESSION from page 1**

organization of the ideas to follow.

- Begin with an interesting fact or statistic. Is there something surprising about your topic that you can use to attract readers to your issue?

  Example:

  Of the many students who come to the Writing Center for tutoring, the most common concern is whether a paper contains an effective introduction.

  Sometimes writing the main sections of a paper can be the best way to start. You can save writing your introduction for a later stage in your writing process when you have an idea about what you want to introduce. Here are some common less effective introductions:

  - Beginning with a “Webster’s Dictionary” introduction. Although this kind of introduction is on the right track, anyone can look up a word in the dictionary and copy the definition. Providing your own definition in the context of your paper and assignment will be more interesting to your readers (and you!).

  - Beginning with a “Dawn of Man” introduction. This kind of introduction makes broad far-reaching statements about the topic since “the beginning of time.” These kinds of generalizations fail to connect with your main thesis and can easily lose readers.

  - The Place Holder Introduction. Generally, a place holder introduction does just that—holds the place of the first paragraph—but it doesn’t really do much or provide readers with anything interesting. Sometimes these weaker introductions need to happen; when you have something more effective to say, this paragraph can be deleted later.

  With some practice and a willingness to experiment with various methods of introducing ideas and grabbing your readers’
Betty Botter had some butter,
"But," she said, "this butter's bitter.
If I bake this bitter butter,
It would make my batter bitter.
But a bit of better butter,
That would make my batter better."
So she bought a bit of butter –
Better than her bitter butter –
And she baked it in her batter;
And the batter was not bitter.
So 'twas better Betty Botter
Bought a bit of better butter.

Ned Nott was shot and Sam Shott was not.
So it is better to be Shott than Nott.
Some say Nott was not shot.
But Shott says he shot Nott.
Either the shot Shott shot at Nott was not
shot,
Or Nott was shot.
If the shot Shott shot shot Nott, Nott was shot.
But if the shot Shott shot shot Shott,
Then Shott was shot, not Nott.
However, the shot Shott shot shot not
Shott, but Nott.
A tree-toad loved a she-toad
Who lived up in a tree.
He was a two-toed tree-toad,
But a three-toed toad was she.
The two-toed tree-toad tried to win
The three-toed she-toad's heart,
For the two-toed tree-toad loved the
ground
That the three-toed tree-toad trod.

Did You Know?

Etymology of Phrases
The origins and histories of idioms, phrases, and other expressions are often even more fascinating than the etymologies, or origins, of the individual words themselves. Here is a selection of well-known expressions and how they came into being.

To Break the Ice
(1) to relax a tense or formal atmosphere or social situation; (2) to make a start on some endeavor.

This came into general use, in sense (1), in English through Lord Byron's "Don Juan" (1823) in the lines:

And your cold people [the British] are beyond all price,
When once you've broken their confounded ice.

The ice in question is metaphorically that on a river or lake in early spring. To break the ice would be to allow boats to pass, marking the beginning of the season's activity after the winter freeze. In this way, this expression has been connected to the start of enterprise for about 400 years.

To Throw the Book at Someone
(1) to punish someone severely.

This figurative book is presumably a book of rules or laws. Originally, and still in its normal usage, this expression meant to impose the maximum penalty. For criminals this is likely to mean life imprisonment. Currently, the expression may be used more generally, often where the punishment or reprimand is far less extreme.

As Mad as a Hatter
(1) utterly insane

There is a number of theories about the root of this simile. Perhaps the most intriguing, and also plausible, was offered in The Journal of the American Medical Association (vol. 155, no. 3). Mercury used to be used in the manufacture of felt hats, so hatters, or hat makers, would come into contact with this poisonous metal a lot. Unfortunately, the effect of such exposure may lead to mercury poisoning, one of the symptoms of which is insanity.

Famously, Lewis Carroll wrote about the Mad Hatter in "Alice in Wonderland" (1865), but there is at least one earlier reference to the expression: in "The Clockmaker" (1817) by Thomas Haliburton.

These days speakers of American English, who use "mad" to mean "angry" as well as "crazy", may be heard to misuse the expression in the former sense.

To Make No Bones About a Matter
(1) to speak frankly and directly

A form of this expression was used as early as 1459, to mean to have no difficulty. It seems evident that the allusion is to the actual occurrence of bones in stews or soup. Soup without bones would offer no difficulty, and accordingly one would have no hesitation in swallowing soup with no bones.

From www.Fun-with-Words.com

More Tongue Twisters
continued from page 2

Betty Botter had some butter,
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If I bake this bitter butter,
It would make my batter bitter.
But a bit of better butter,
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Better than her bitter butter –
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And the batter was not bitter.
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But a three-toed toad was she.
The two-toed tree-toad tried to win
The three-toed she-toad's heart,
For the two-toed tree-toad loved the
ground
That the three-toed tree-toad trod.
But the two-toed tree-toad tried in vain;
He couldn't please her whim.
From her tree-toad bower,
With her three-toed power,
“Strategies for Integrating Research in Your Papers” was a very successful workshop, attracting 28 students and lots of positive feedback! Here’s what we learned from Mike Will, English faculty and Writing Center tutor:

• how a good thesis statement can keep you on track while researching and writing
• navigating the different research phases you’ll encounter
• how outlines build unity and coherence throughout your paper
• using annotated bibliographies to manage your research and documentations
• organizing your research and notes to make writing your first draft a breeze
• using quotes and paraphrases effectively to build an argument or make a point

Don’t miss our April workshop, “Unlocking the Secrets of Citing Research,” where we’ll cover:

• insider hints to create well-documented writing
• learn where and why to cite information
• APA and MLA citation hints

Mike Will leads the Strategies for Integrating Research workshop held February 25.

"There are a thousand thoughts lying within a man that he does not know till he takes up a pen to write."

Upcoming Writing Center Workshop
Wednesday, April 14: Citing Research, 12:45 - 2 p.m., Room L228

Resources from the Web

Using American Psychological Association Style Format
http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r_apa.html

Guide to Using MLA Style
http://library.concordia.ca/faqs/mla.pdf

Citing Electronic Sources, MLA Style
http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r_mla.html

Beat the Rush!

Writing Center tutors meet with students on a drop-in basis, so you never need an appointment for tutoring. But, as midterms and finals approach, we can get pretty busy, which means longer waiting times to see a tutor.

You can minimize your wait time by visiting us during our quieter hours:

Monday - Thursday:
8 - 9 a.m. and Noon - 5 p.m.
Friday:
10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

See you at the Writing Center!