

## • **About Introductions**

Introductions are part of the first impression you make to readers. Good introductions are engaging—they draw the reader into your paper. Also, make sure your introduction is closely connected to the rest of the paper. A good introduction should contribute to your argument and give the reader some indication of where the paper is headed.

Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the following introductions. The first introduction is not as specific as the latter two. What difference does this make?

There have been many pieces of literature written on the subject of feminism. While each piece of writing differs from all of the others in some aspect, they can all be put into conversation...

There have been many perspectives on women's rights throughout the ages, expressed in many different formats. Sojourner Truth, though illiterate, spoke to large crowds about her beliefs, while others like Susan Glaspell and Cyndi Lauper used their theatrical and musical composition to express their beliefs about women and women's roles in society.

What do an illiterate black woman's speech from 1851, a hit song from 1983, and a book written by a Harvard graduate in 1992 have in common?

## **Some Common Introduction Forms**

- Using a "hook" or provocative anecdote to get the reader's attention:  
Six-year-old Christopher spotted something from the rear window of his grandparents' car. Three great radio towers stood close together in a field, one of them immensely tall, one slightly shorter, and one just half the size of the second. "A family," Christopher mumbled nonchalantly against the glass.  
(from "Family Is One of the Few Certainties We Will Take with Us Far into the Future" by Carol Shields)
- Opening with a question:  
What do Steven Martin, Dustin Hoffman, Albert Einstein, Jerry Garcia, Michael Stipe, Eddie Vedder, Martina Navratilova, Carl Lewis, and 12 million other Americans have in common? All of these well-known people were or are vegetarians.  
(from "Live Longer and Healthier: Stop Eating Meat!" by C. Renzi Stone)

Can an employee be dismissed for dating a fellow employee? Can a manager monitor conversations in his employees' break room? Does a drug test invade privacy, or is it a reasonable safeguard against accidents on the job? Is e-mail private correspondence? These and other questions strike at the heart of the conflict between an employer's concern for managing the safety and security of the workplace and an employee's privacy interest.

(from "Privacy Rights: The New Employee Relations Battlefield" by William S. Hubbart)

- **Creating common ground:**  
Like you, I've seen innumerable Calvin Klein ads featuring sallow, sullen, scrawny youths. Not once have I had an overwhelming urge to rush out and buy some heroin, and probably neither have you.

(from "Victims of Everything" by Jacob Sullum)

We love juries and we hate them. It has been so since the emergence of the modern jury in 1670. Our ambivalence about juries is a tension built into the system.

(from "Juries on the Rampage" by Burton S. Katz)

- **Unsettling assumed common ground:**  
College students continue to propagate the myth that Nike and other apparel companies contract out to foreign "sweatshops" where over-worked and underpaid workers toil in unhealthy conditions.

(from "Good Propaganda, Bad Economics" by Jamie Sneider)

The biggest menace to the personal security of Americans may not be terrorism but government's response to it.

(from "Poking Holes in the Constitution" by Robert Kuttner)

- **Explaining the significance of the problem or question:**  
More states are requiring high school students to pass a standardized test before they collect a diploma, and the protests are growing louder. The objections in Massachusetts are especially noisy. In part that is because Bay Staters are a querulous bunch; in part it's because they Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System—the MCAS—is regarded as one of the nation's tougher high school tests.

(from "The 'MCAS' Teens Give Each Other" by Jeff Jacoby)

- **Summarizing or previewing the paper:**  
The state attorneys general and trial lawyers behind the temporarily derailed \$516 billion tobacco settlement have opened a Pandora's box of legal tricks. Long after the tobacco matter is in the past, these maneuvers could continue to be used against other unwitting industries that have nothing to do with cigarettes.

(from "Keep Guns out of Lawyers' Hands" by John R. Lott Jr.)

**Adapted:** Rottenberg, Annette T. *Elements of Argument*, 7th ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2003.