



# Writing an Introductory Paragraph

Don't worry, you don't have to  
write the full essay :)



# Requirements:

**Hook:** Grab your reader's attention with an interesting idea.

**Bridge:** Use a short sentence or even just a quick phrase (as I've done here) to link the hook idea to the specific literary work you'll discuss in the essay. Without this bridge, your introductory paragraph will feel choppy.

**Summary:** You need to write a sentence or two summarizing elements of the story that will be important for readers to know as they work through your essay. Assume your reader does not know the original story you're discussing. You need to fill in the necessary story elements to help your reader understand the points you make in your essay.

**Thesis:** This single sentence clearly declares the topic of your essay. In this case, the thesis explains Hughes' theme. Be sure that the thesis is bold, compelling, and offers a position that could inspire two reasonable people to have an interesting debate.



## Example:

It's the smallest actions which often create the largest change. This paradox is explored in Langston Hughes' famous short story, "Thank You Ma'am," as he introduces Mrs. Jones, a forceful, yet understanding working-class woman who helps Roger, a troubled teenager, choose a morally correct path. Early in the story, Roger tries unsuccessfully to swipe Mrs. Jones' purse as she wearily heads home after a long day of work. Instead of calling the police, Mrs. Jones brings the boy home to cook him a meal and, unknown to Roger at the time, change his life. Hughes uses the relationship between the unlikely pair to celebrate the massive power of minute acts of kindness.



## Assignment:

Using the four elements shown here (hook, bridge, summary, and thesis), write an introductory paragraph of your own. Choose a different theme from Hughes' story and follow the pattern. Don't worry; you don't have to write the entire essay. You just need to write this one introductory paragraph.

Hint: The theme of a story is the overarching lesson to be learned. One story can have many themes. A theme should apply to our world, not just the characters in the story.