**Introduction**

The introduction is the broad beginning of the paper that answers three important questions:

1. What is this?
2. Why am I reading it?
3. What do you want the reader to do/know?

You should answer these questions by doing the following:

1. Set the context: provide general information about the main idea, explaining the situation so the reader can make sense of the topic and the claims you make and support. Depending on your reader, you may have to explain a great deal or you may not need to say much at all.
2. State why the main idea is important: tell the reader why he/she should care. Your goal is to create a compelling, clear, and convincing essay people will want to read and act upon.
3. State your thesis*/*claim: compose a sentence or two stating the position you will support with sound reasoning

Make sure you avoid the following when creating your thesis:

* A thesis is not a title
* A thesis is not an announcement of the subject
* A thesis is not a statement of absolute fact
* A thesis is not the whole essay

Quick Checklist:

\_\_\_\_\_ The thesis/claim follows the guidelines outlined above

\_\_\_\_\_ The thesis/claim matches the requirements and goals of the assignment

\_\_\_\_\_ The thesis/claim is clear and easily recognizable

\_\_\_\_\_ The thesis/claim seems supportable by good reasoning

Adapted from Purdue OWL’s guide to Introductions and Thesis Statements. Checklist and steps to avoid are adapted from Writing with a Thesis: A Rhetoric Reader by David Skwire and Sarah Skwire.