

WRITING A STRONG INTRODUCTION

Though it may sound counterintuitive, writing the introduction to your essay later in the process can be a useful writing strategy if you aren't quite sure how to begin. If necessary, move on to the body paragraphs and come back to this task later.

Include the following items in this paragraph:

- Attention grabber—this could be any one of the following:
 - direct quotation from your book or a reliable, relevant source
 - fact or statistic that highlights something interesting related to your book or a topic you've researching
 - anecdote (brief story) that begins to explore the topic of your essay
 - vivid description that creates a clear image of the book's setting or an event in your book
 - anything else that orients your reader to the topic in a clever, engaging way
- The title and author of your book along with a brief summary
- Brief mention of your researched topic(s)—show the connection to your book in some way
- Thesis—a statement that conveys the purpose of your essay

Use the space below to write your paragraph. Remember to use your best writing skills! You will be evaluated on the elements listed above as well as your ability to write complete sentences (no fragments or run-ons) and to adhere to basic rules of mechanics/punctuation.

Attention grabber (with citation if necessary): _____

_____ (_____).

Summary of book and connection to research: _____

**This section should include the author and title of your book.*

Thesis: _____

**There should not be a parenthetical citation at the end of the thesis.*

Sample 1: *The Secret Life of Bees* by Sue Monk Kidd

"Changes were coming – even to South Carolina – you could practically smell them in the air" (Kidd 231). Those changes are indeed dramatic for Lily Owens, protagonist in Sue Monk Kidd's novel *The Secret Life of Bees*. Set during 1964 in South Carolina, this book takes place in the middle of the Civil Rights Movement. Lily, a fourteen-year-old white girl, and her African-American housekeeper, Rosaleen, flee from Lily's home to escape their tragic and violent pasts. Eventually they find refuge in the welcoming home of African-American beekeeping sisters. Throughout the book, readers witness the racial tension, violence, and social unrest that dominated the Civil Rights Era. Kidd's characters in this novel are deeply impacted by the racism that was so prevalent in the South in 1964.

Sample 2: *The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck

The ground, cracked from the lack of moisture, slowly erodes. The corn, beaten down by the harsh sun, yellows and dries. The loss of the only sustaining crop weighs on the farmer's shoulders and gnaws at all of them. How will they survive? John Steinbeck's novel *The Grapes of Wrath* paints a grim picture that lacks hope or life. It follows the lives of the Joads, farmers who are forced off their land and migrate to California to find jobs and a home. It takes place during the 1930s—the height of the Great Depression. During this time of great financial distress, many Americans found themselves just struggling to survive. Overall, Steinbeck's book is an accurate portrayal of farming life in the 1930s.