

Prewriting: Some Questions to Get You Started

To prepare your introduction, ask yourself these questions:

1. What is the most important thing I want to say in this paper? What claim do I want to make? (This is your thesis.)
2. What am I doing in this paper? What do I want the paper to accomplish? (Do I want to tell a story? Compare two or more things? Describe something? Argue a point?)

To prepare the body of your essay, ask yourself these questions:

1. What specific points must I argue to make my thesis clear and convincing?
2. What evidence do I have to demonstrate each point?
3. In what order should I make these points? Chronologically? In order of importance? Do they build on each other?

To generate a meaningful conclusion, ask these questions:

1. What conclusions can I draw about this topic? What have I proved? What is still puzzling, troubling, unanswerable?
2. Why does this matter? Are there long-lasting consequences? Surprising results? Effects on other issues? Have I changed my opinion?