Tips for Writing Introductions
(For the thesis-driven paper)

Aim to write an introduction that . . .

- *Provides context and narrows in toward your thesis.*
    A good introduction provides brief background of what you are about to argue in your paper. Think of it like a film: scan the horizon to give your reader a quick chance to see the larger landscape, then zoom in on the particulars of the scene you will be looking at in detail.

- *Grabs your reader's interest in the first few sentences.*
    The whole point of those opening sentences is to get your reader involved in your paper. Use active, attention-grabbing words to make your topic seem alive, relevant, and thought-provoking.

- *Introduces the relevant information necessary for understanding the scope of the paper.*
    Inform your reader of the specific study, research, or literature that you will be focusing on, because it is vital to your reader's understanding of your thesis.

Try to avoid writing an introduction that . . .

- *Makes overarching, oversimplified generalizations.*
    Good writing does not involve making sweeping statements about the entire world since the beginning of time. Generalizations are often based on stereotypes and assumptions and thus cannot be proven. If your statement is not verifiable and relevant, it should not be included.

- *Asks rhetorical questions.*
    Asking rhetorical questions in formal academic writing will weaken your reader's perception of your writing as concise, purposeful, and authoritative. Make strong connections that lead into your thesis instead.

- *Is long or meandering.*
    Keep a tight focus! This is your reader's initial impression of your paper, so impress him or her with your concise and controlled prose. A wandering introduction may indicate that the following argument is unclear even to you.