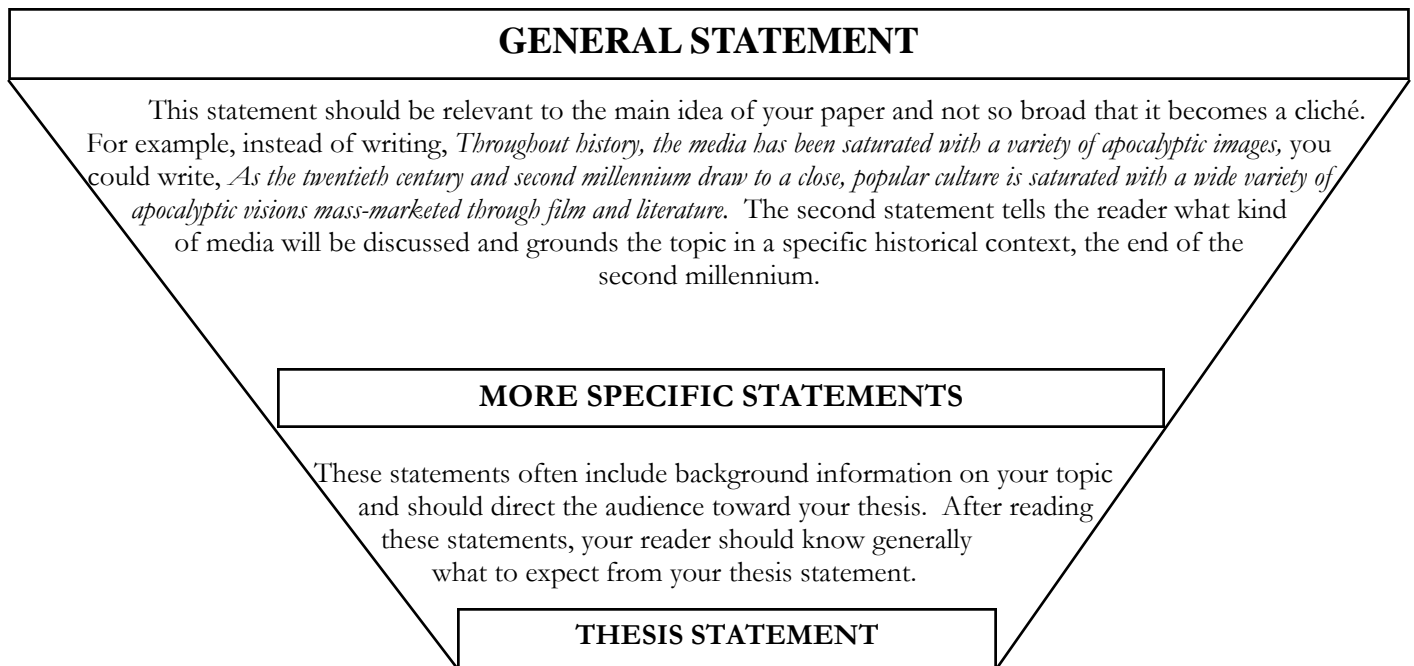


## The Inverted Pyramid: A Model for Effective Introductions

*A good introduction not only gives your thesis statement and the appropriate background information on your topic, but also grabs your readers' attention and draws them into the rest of your paper. Here is one way to organize an introduction.*



### Things to avoid in an introduction:

- **Including too much detail.** If you tell your audience everything that you have to say in your paper in the introduction, then why should they bother to read the rest of it? Present the thesis that you will discuss further in the paper, but do not try to prove it in the introduction.
- **Straying too far off topic.** It is important for your reader to have some background on your topic, but this information must be appropriate to your thesis. Get to the point as soon as possible, without rambling about irrelevant issues. Present only the most relevant background information in the introduction.
- **Quoting dictionaries.** We all have read papers that begin “According to Webster’s Dictionary...” While it is important for you as a writer to formulate your own definitions within your paper, this trite opening is a sure way to put your reader to sleep.

Remember that this model shows just one way to write introductions. For more suggestions, read sample papers and writing style guides, and check out the sources listed below.

For more information on writing introductions, see

*The St. Martin’s Handbook* (5th ed): 71, 95-96, 408-9

<http://leo.stcloudstate.edu/acadwrite/intro.html>

<http://writing.richmond.edu/writing/wweb/intros.html>