

WRITING AN INTRODUCTION

Although it's sometimes difficult to write the first sentence of an introduction, avoid falling into clichés:

1. **Do not repeat the language of your assignment.**
2. **Do not quote a dictionary definition:** *The dictionary defines risk as . . .*
3. **Do not try to be grand:** *For centuries philosophers have debated the burning question of . . .*

Instead, try one of the following openers:

1. **A striking quotation:**

“If you’re old enough to fight for your country, you’re old enough to drink to it.”

2. **A striking fact:**

A recent study reports that at most colleges three out of four students “binged” at least once in the previous thirty days, consuming more than seven drinks at a sitting. Almost half binge once a week, and those who binge most are not just members of fraternities, but their officers.

3. **A relevant anecdote:**

When Jim S., president of Alpha Omega, joined his fourth-year fraternity brothers in the State U tradition of “a fifth in your fourth,” by downing most of a fifth of whiskey in less than an hour, he didn’t plan to become this year’s eighth college fatality from alcohol poisoning.

4. **A combination of all three:**

It is often said that “if you’re old enough to fight for your country, you’re old enough to drink to it.”^{quotation} Tragically, Jim S., president of Alpha Omega, no longer has a chance to do either. When he joined his fourth-year fraternity brothers in the State U tradition of “a fifth in your fourth,” by downing most of a fifth of whiskey in less than an hour, he didn’t expect to become this year’s eighth college fatality from alcohol poisoning.^{anecdote} According to a recent study, at most colleges three out of four students have, like Jim S., drunk seven drinks at a sitting in the last thirty days. And those who drink the most are not just members of fraternities, but, like Jim S., officers.^{striking fact}