

# Essay Introductions

Quick and Easy Guide

2014

# What does an introduction do?

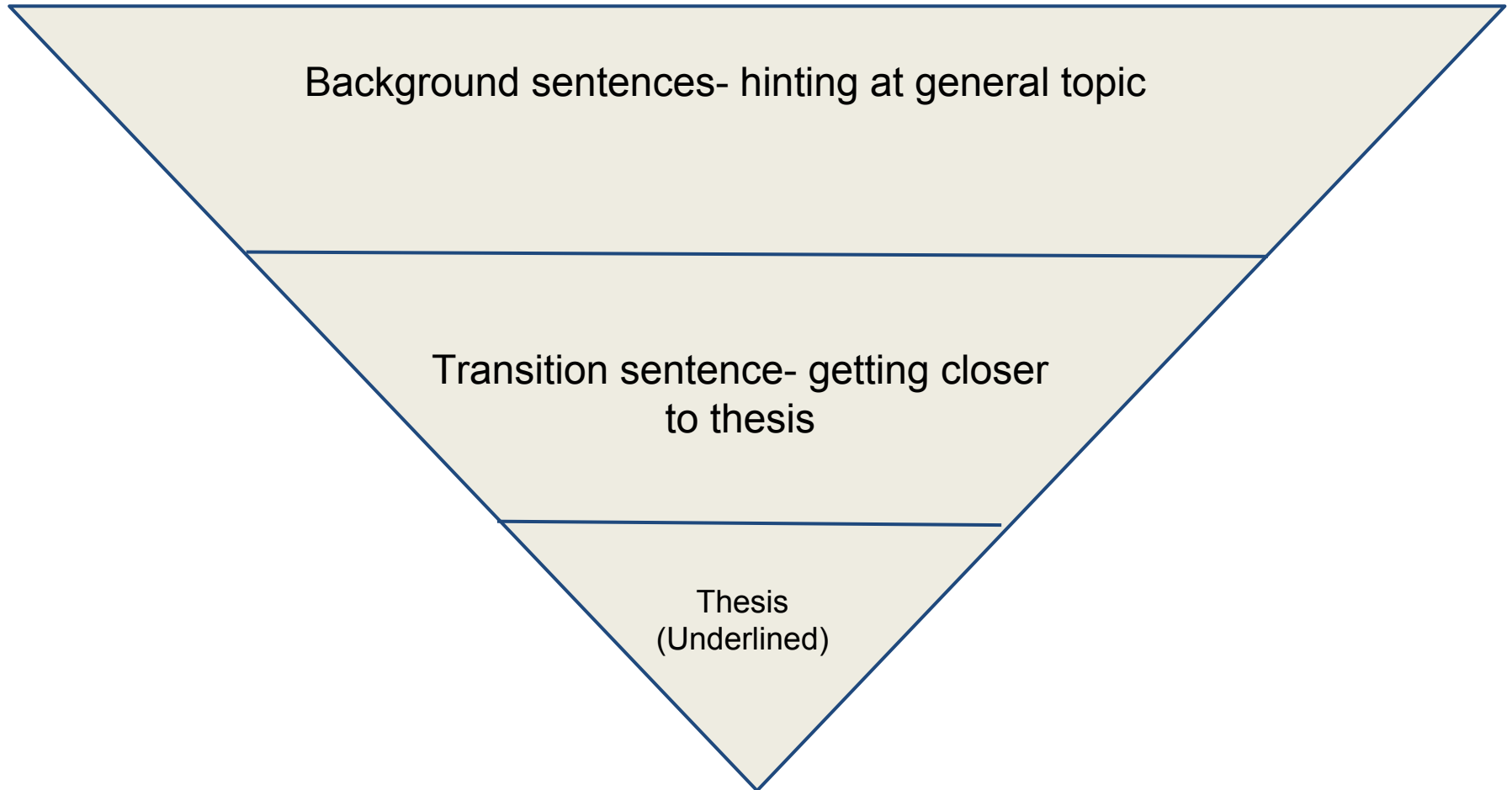
- Starts your essay..of course
- Lets your reader know what the essay is about  
AND what point you are trying to prove

# The parts to introduction

- Topic Background (1-2 sentences)
- Transition sentence hinting at the question of the essay or getting closer to thesis
- Thesis statement (underlined)

Note: this means your introduction should be short: about 4-5 sentences

# Introduction: General to Specific



# Background Do's and Don'ts

- You can try for a “hook”- an interesting first sentence or two, but it is not 100% essential.
- The background can have an interesting anecdote (story), statistic, question.
- You **shouldn't** use fictional, flowery language:  
“Imagine a world without the freedom to state your opinion...” “The stormy seas crashed upon the shore, as the Pilgrims looked out to their new home, breathing deeply and adjusting their damp, dark, woolen clothing”

# How to get ideas for background

- What would a reader need to know about your topic before they start reading?
- Who is involved in your topic? What adjectives would you use to describe them?
- When, where, and why did the events happen?
- What earlier events led up to this moment? Are the events part of a larger pattern?
- Is there a quick story or statistic **that you are NOT** using as evidence that might be an interesting start to essay?

A sample with background in green, transition in red, and thesis in black

In 1788, the first U.S Congress had a challenging task. They needed to amend the Constitution to add a Bill of Rights, protecting essential American freedoms. Many citizens had not wanted to ratify the Constitution at all, because it did not protect these freedoms. James Madison's final list of 10 amendments included one of the most essential: the protection against self-incrimination. Without this right, protected by the 5th Amendment, Americans would be vulnerable to injustice in the courtroom.

A sample with background in green, transition in red, and thesis in black

Trying to find an interesting meal? Diners in the United States have a wide number of options from traditional “meat and potatoes” meals to sushi, Latin American, and vegetarian. In fact, a recent study by the Warren Group estimated that each day in Massachusetts, two new restaurants open. **With some many choices, it is incredibly difficult to ponder what is best.** When one considers all the factors, it becomes clear that pizza is the best food because it comes in so many varieties, is affordable, and can be nutritious.