

WRITING AN INTRODUCTION

Some writers find it so hard to write the first sentence of a paper that they fall into clichés. Avoid these common ones:

1. **Do not repeat the language of your assignment.**
2. **Do not quote a dictionary definition:** *Webster's* defines risk as . . .
3. **Do not try to be grand:** For centuries, philosophers have debated the burning question of . . . (Good questions convey their own importance.)

Instead, try one of the following openers:

1. **A pithy quotation:**

“Honk if you love Jesus. Text while driving if you want to meet him.”

2. **A relevant anecdote:**

When Jenny S. glanced at the text message from her boss, she didn't expect to become the fiftieth distracted driving fatality in her state this year.

3. **A striking fact:**

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration reports that in 2014, approximately seven percent of drivers on the road were using a cellphone at any given moment.

The National Safety Council reports that in 2014, over a quarter of all motor vehicle crashes involved either talking on a cellphone or texting.

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

One of the pleasures of Jenny S.'s morning commute was reading the words of wisdom offered on a sign on the side of a local church. Last Friday, that sign read, “Honk if you love Jesus. Text while driving if you want to meet him.”^{quotation} Tragically, when Jenny S. glanced at a text message from her boss that morning, she became her state's fiftieth distracted driving fatality.^{anecdote} Jenny S. is not alone. One recent study reports that approximately seven percent of drivers on the road at any given moment are using a cellphone; another reports over a quarter of all motor vehicle crashes involved some form of cellphone use.^{striking fact}