

A great introduction has three parts

1. Defines the broad topic of the paper.
2. Identifies a problem, issue, or subtopic.
3. Establishes the writer's purpose, position, or thesis.

According to Canadian political historian Riley M. McDonald (2017), “the outdatedness of the first-past-the-post (FPTP) system has eroded participation in the Canadian electoral system to the point that wide segment of the Canadian electorate simply ignores elections” (p. 133). For the vast majority of Canada’s history, voters have unquestioningly abided by the British First-Past-The-Post (FPP) election system. Recently, debate surrounding FPP has made its way into mainstream media coverage with some commentators suggesting it has outlasted its use. Proportional representation, on the other hand, is favoured by modern progressive democracies in Northern Europe because of its tendency to give voice to a broader electorate (Blute & Simonsen, 2016). Likewise, a recent study reveals that as many as 41% of Canadians would rather proportional representation (Ackbar, 2018), and 62% are “extremely dissatisfied” with the current voting system (Centre for Better Democracy, 2017, p. 9). Why does Canada use a voting system that appears to be increasingly out of step with the values of Canadians? Not only does FPTP fail to produce governments that accurately represent the will of the people, it leads to a corrosive and irreparable cynicism from which our electoral government may never recover.

What is an introduction supposed do? The introduction is a vital part of your paper. It introduces your topic and informs readers of the purpose of your essay (its main idea/thesis). Knowing how to get started can be difficult, so consider your purpose for writing (e.g., to inform or persuade) and your audience (are they knowledgeable about your topic? new to it?) when deciding what strategy to use.

The Anatomy of introductions

Some introduction-writing strategies

1. Open with a quotation or a fact or statistic that clearly illustrates or relates to your topic.
2. Present a commonly held viewpoint and then argue against it or show how it is incomplete.
3. Define key terms, especially if they have multiple or discipline-specific meanings. Conversely, avoid defining terms around which there is little to discuss.
4. Provide background information about the problem or situation to place your ideas in context.
5. Pose a question and answer it with your thesis statement.

Other useful elements

Tell a story or anecdote to illustrate your topic and create interest or suspense.

Outline the major sections of your paper.

Conduct a literature review summarizing some of what has been written on your topic and how your essay will add to it.

1. According to Canadian political historian Riley M. McDonald (2017), “the outdatedness of the first-past-the-post (FPTP) system has eroded participation in the Canadian electoral system to the point that wide segment of the Canadian electorate simply ignores elections” (p. 133). For the vast majority of Canada’s history, voters have unquestioningly abided by the British First-Past-The-Post (FPP) election system. **2.** While Canada has embraced shifts in *who* can vote over past decades, our voting system, which is to say *how* we vote has continued unabated. **3.** On the other hand, proportional representation, a system that allocates power in proportion to votes cast, is favoured by modern progressive democracies in Northern Europe because of its tendency to give voice to a broader electorate (Blute & Simonsen, 2016). **4.** Likewise, a recent studies reveal that as many as 41% of Canadians would rather proportional representation (Ackbar, 2018), and 62% are “extremely dissatisfied” with the current voting system (Centre for Better Democracy, 2017, p. 9). **5.** Why does Canada use a voting system that appears to be increasingly out of step with the values of Canadians? Not only does FPTP fail to produce governments that accurately represent the will of the people, it leads to a corrosive and irreparable cynicism from which our electoral government may never recover.