
**OBJECTIVES
FOR THIS LESSON:**

1. To understand the key role played by the introductory paragraph in giving direction and focus to your essay.
 2. To focus on a few key elements that go into writing an effective introductory paragraph.
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Writing the Introductory Paragraph

The primary source documents for this lesson are displayed on the next three pages. All of the exercises for this lesson are based on these primary sources and the background information provided here.

**THE PRIMARY SOURCES
AND THE EXERCISES**

The ten primary source documents for this lesson deal with three major totalitarian regimes of the 20th century. The sources include poster art, a book cover, photos, speeches and a passage from a novel. Historians sometimes argue about the value of the word “totalitarian.” In the case of these three all-powerful and aggressive states, the term seems appropriate. The DBQ for the exercises here will ask you to think about why so many citizens in these lands came to support such systems.

**PUTTING TOGETHER
A COMPLETE ESSAY**

Keep in mind that the final four lessons in this workbook are the ones that focus on the key tasks in organizing and writing an entire essay. Here is where you are in this sequence of lessons:

- Lesson 5 Taking notes and creating a clear essay organization.
- Lesson 6 Writing an effective introductory paragraph based on your thesis statement.
- Lesson 7 Writing the internal paragraphs of your essay and using transitions to link them together effectively.
- Lesson 8 Writing a strong conclusion.

**KEY CONCEPTS
AND LEARNING STRATEGIES**

The primary sources and the exercises for this lesson will help you think about how to write the most important paragraph of your DBQ essay, the introductory paragraph.

1. The introductory paragraph should **restate the topic or DBQ in your own words**; it should **present your thesis** simply and clearly; and it may also **hint at the few key ideas or points you will develop** in detail in the rest of the essay.
2. **The introductory paragraph should NOT develop in detail your main ideas or supporting details or explanations.** Save these for the internal paragraphs of the essay. Make few if any specific references to the primary sources. Your goal should be to set the scene and introduce the main themes in your essay.

Lesson 6 — Writing the Introductory Paragraph

The Documents The Totalitarian Challenge



Document 1

Adolf Hitler addresses a 1939 rally, while thousands of teenage girls in the *Bund Deutscher Mädel*, or League of German Girls, spell out the words “Wir gehoeren dir!” — which in English is, “We belong to you!”

*Debra Gierach,
courtesy of USHMM Photo Archives*

Document 2

“A year of unprecedented victories and triumphs is behind us. What twelve months ago seemed the product of an overactive imagination has become reality. The flags of national renewal fly over the Reich, and a revolution of vast extent has captured the German people and given them back their true nature. ...

“What an astonishing collection of significant political, cultural and economic events mark this year of German awakening! It finally destroyed the Marxist nonsense that had tortured the German people for six decades, condemning them to political impotence. Only a year ago it threatened the Reich, ready at any moment to seize power. Today we know of it only through stories. It was replaced by the idea of a true community of the people that was not the empty theory of a meeting hall, rather step by step and piece by piece became a total and happy reality. The socialism that we preached for years found its living expression in the active participation of all Germans, perhaps the most wonderful and exciting event of the past year.

“Twelve months ago the parties carried on their nonsense in the parliaments, government crisis followed crisis, and the fate of the Reich was determined by special interests that used the holy idea of Germany only for their party’s benefit. This contemptible parliamentarianism, whose only Christmas gift to the people was the collapse of a cabinet, is gone. The German people overwhelmingly have affirmed one man and one idea. A movement fully aware of its responsibility governs the Reich.

“The people themselves, however, could not support the new regime any more strongly than they do. People, state and nation have become one, and the strong will of the Führer is over us all.”

New Year’s Eve speech by German propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels reviewing the first year of the National Socialist revolution in Germany.

*Courtesy of the German Propaganda Archive.
URL: <http://www.calvin.edu/academic/cas/gpa/>.*

Lesson 6 — Writing the Introductory Paragraph

The Documents



Document 3

By 1929, Joseph Stalin was the master of the Soviet Union's communist state. Soviet propaganda depicted Stalin as all-knowing and the state as the sole source of all human happiness. This poster conveys the image of a godlike Stalin looking on as his state-guided new industrial order transforms Soviet society.

Poster Collection, Hoover Institution Archives

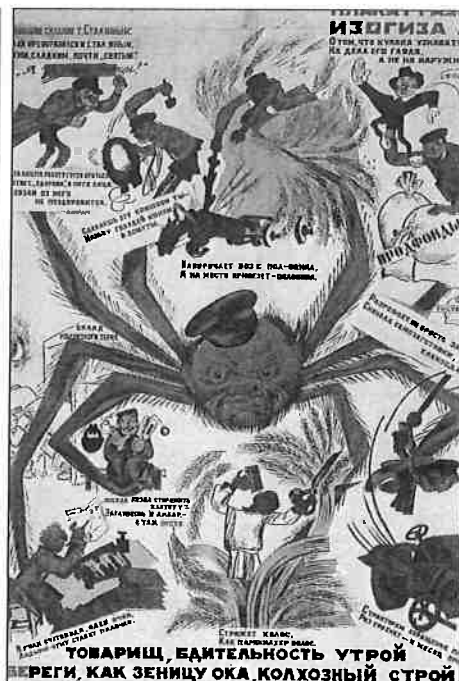
Document 4

"Such is the law of exploiters — to beat the backward and weak. It is the jungle law of capitalism. You are backward, you are weak. Therefore you are wrong; hence you can be beaten and enslaved. You are mighty. Therefore you are right; hence we must be wary of you.

"That is why we must no longer lag behind. . . .

In ten years at most we must make good the distance that separates us from the advanced capitalist countries. We have all the 'objective' possibilities for this. The only thing lacking is the ability to make proper use of these possibilities. It is time to put an end to the rotten line of non-interference in production. It is time to adopt a new line, one corresponding to the present mood — the line of interfering in everything. If you are a factory manager, interfere in all the affairs of the factory, look into everything, let nothing escape you, learn and learn again."

Joseph Stalin in a speech to industrial managers in Moscow in 1931.



Documents 5 and 6

To justify their all-powerful states, Hitler and Stalin depicted threats from evil, all-powerful enemies. On the left is a Nazi book titled *The Poisonous Mushroom*. The mushroom is the Jew, shown as a fungus living parasitically off of other cultures. In the Soviet poster on the right, the spider is a "kulak," Stalin's label for peasants opposed to joining state-run "collective" farms. The spider is seen preying on collective farmers in all sorts of ways.

Book Cover on the Left: Gichner, courtesy of USHMM Photo Archives

Poster on the Right: Poster Collection, Hoover Institution Archives

Lesson 6 — Writing the Introductory Paragraph

The Documents



Document 7

In 1949, Mao Zedong's revolutionary forces finally took power in China. Mao hoped to remake China into a perfect communist society. He was often pictured as he is here, as a god-like figure whose words in his "little red book" were to be studied and followed with

Courtesy of the Library of Congress

Document 8

In 1966, Mao launched the "Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution." Its aim, supposedly, was to get rid of officials who were not revolutionary enough. This poster captures the spirit of that time, when bands of young Red Guards roamed China attacking educated people and anyone else identified with China's political or cultural past.

Courtesy of the Library of Congress



Document 9

With World War II, the Nazis got their chance to carry out the goal of exterminating the Jewish people. In time, millions of Jews were destroyed in "death camps" such as Auschwitz, Sobibor or Treblinka. At the end of the war, many German citizens, such as the woman in this photo, were paraded through the camps to see the results of Nazi tyranny.

Courtesy of the National Archives



Document 10

““What I said to myself at the time was ‘they are not human beings, they are kulaks’ ... What torture was meted out to them! In order to massacre them it was necessary to proclaim that kulaks are not human beings. Just as the Germans proclaimed that Jews are not human beings. Thus did Lenin and Stalin proclaim Kulaks are not human beings. But that is a lie. They are people! They are human beings!”

Vasily Grossman, from "Forever Flowing" (Northwestern University Press, 1997), a novel about the Stalin years of the 1930s. Here, he describes how he and other Soviet citizens were taught to label peasants who resisted collectivization as kulaks and regard them as enemies of the society.