A Quick Guide to Introductions

1. Common Ground: Factual framing information that everyone will agree with.
   • Makes clear what your topic is from the start
   • Suggests to the reader that you’re someone who knows what they’re talking about, which makes them more willing to go along with you when you get to your argument

   Like many romantic novels, Charlotte Brontë’s Jane Eyre uses the popular trope of a lower-class woman marrying an upper-class man, which in the Victorian era often came in the form of a governess marrying her master. Henry James is clearly examining this trope in The Turn of the Screw, in which the governess, inspired by romantic novels such as Jane Eyre, enjoys imagining herself in a romantic relationship with her charges’ uncle.

   This opening makes clear what texts are going to be discussed, as well as the broader topic of the paper (the Victorian romantic trope of the governess marrying the master).

2. Problem: Introduce the question or problem present in this commonly agreed upon information.
   • Often starts with “however”
   • Include the consequences of not addressing the problem, so that the reader will see why it is important to read your paper and find out more about it

   However, unlike Jane Eyre, the governess is not so fortunate when it comes to uncovering shocking coincidences that leave her both newly rich and able to marry the socially superior man she loves. Instead, the governess of The Turn of the Screw presents a more realistic representation of what would actually happen to a lower-class woman in Victorian England with desires for privileges beyond her station.

   This introduction of the problem begins by showing the distinct difference between the two seemingly similar texts. It then gives importance by arguing that The Turn of the Screw gives a more accurate portrayal of Victorian society and how lower-class women were viewed.

3. Conclusion: Your response to the problem, aka your thesis.

   Henry James’ novel argues that such a governess will only remain haunted by her socially unacceptable desires, while the rest of society is in turn haunted by her, a silent threat of intrusion into the upper-class way of life.
A Quick Guide to Conclusions

1. Restatement of argument (1-2 sentences)
   • Do not use the exact same language as your thesis!
   • Try and express what you have proven to the reader

   In Henry James' *The Turn of the Screw*, social ascension takes on an element of horror, portrayed not as a romantic love story but as a ghost story tempered by insanity. Both the governess and her similarly lower-class ghosts embody the fear that the lower-classes will try to break into the structure of the upper-class.

   *This restatement of the argument revisits the significance of* *The Turn of the Screw* *as a realistic portrayal of Victorian romantic tropes, as well as how the individual characters are used in the text to show a fear of class mobility (as proven throughout the preceding paper).*

2. Contained broadening
   • Don’t go too broad!
   • Keep your broadening still related to the text in some way, such as reflecting on the larger implications when it comes to the entire novel (when you’ve been working with just one chapter) or an author’s collective works (when you’ve only been dealing one work), or possibly bringing up other questions raised by your argument (which someone else might want to address)
   • Offer the larger implications of your argument in a context that is greater than just the text you have been discussing

   When Mrs. Grose says in regards to Peter Quint, “But if he isn’t a gentleman—” the governess herself quickly responds, “He’s a horror” (22). Anyone who is not already a member of the upper-class is a potential threat to established society’s stability, even in the case of Jane Eyre, who ends her life in an apparently acceptable housewife role—a role which obscures the fact that she has married far above her station, achieving the seemingly impossible in Victorian society. Thus, the governess of *The Turn of the Screw* is a haunting reminder of the threatening and intrusive manner in which such seemingly romantic occurrences were viewed.

   *This broadening then indicates that romantic novels like Jane Eyre actually take on a frightening tone when viewed through such a lens, offering a new way in which to view texts typically seen as frivolous and harmless.*