

Samples of Opening Paragraphs for a Short Philosophy Paper

For illustrative purposes only

In what follows, you'll read 3 samples of opening paragraphs. The last example is a whole paper (on a topic totally different from ours), and it is a bit more sophisticated than what you are required to do. However, take a look at the structure and language: how concise and exact everything is. All of these samples are grade A material (the very last one is an A+). They all follow the basic structure I talked about.

The difference between an introduction like the one I was recommending not to write and this type of opening paragraph should be clear: If you want to call the opening paragraph an introduction, that's fine with me: all I want to stress is that you need to **get right to the point, stating the thesis of your essay, the side you'll be taking** (agree or disagree with the thesis) **and the reasons why you're taking that side**. After each sample below, I'll provide a short commentary of why I think that's a good opening / paper.

• Sample 1

Socrates on the Moral Authority of the State

In the *Crito*, Socrates makes some surprisingly strong claims about the moral authority of the state, which might even seem to be inconsistent both with another fundamental claim he makes in the *Crito* and with certain claims he makes in the *Apology*. I shall argue that although these claims seem to be in some tension with each other, the crucial claims about the authority of the state in the *Crito* can plausibly be interpreted in such a way as to remove any real inconsistency with the other claims.

Commentary: The opening paragraph is very concise, but very nicely written. The problem is plainly stated, and then I explain clearly what I'm going to do in the paper--all in just two sentences. There's no rambling introduction with sentences starting with "Since the beginning of time, mankind has pondered the mysteries of etc."

The style is straightforward, striving for clarity rather than literary flair. Jargon is avoided as far as possible.

However, the sentences are a bit too long for my taste. Try to avoid wordy sentences.

• Sample 2

Changing the Laws of Physics

Peter Van Inwagen ambitiously sets out to prove once and for all that we must choose between free will and determinism, because both cannot hold for this world. In "Determinism", he defines both determinism and free will, and gives a deductive argument for how these two ways of the world cannot coexist. His argument nearly succeeds, but for one error. In this paper, I will show how his conception of determinism fails simply because the "laws of physics" he envisions are problematic. In order for his "laws of physics" to work in the argument, they must be independent rules for understanding our world, but Van Inwagen does not give sufficient reason to interpret them as such.

Example Of Philosophy Paper

Justin P. McBrayer, Peter J. Markie



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Research Papers For Dummies Geraldine Woods, 2002-07-05 From blank page to final draft this is your straightforward guide to research papers You're sitting at your desk in a classroom or in an airless cubicle wondering how many minutes are left in a seemingly endless day when suddenly your teacher or supervisor lowers the boom She wants a research paper complete with footnotes and a list of sources She wants accuracy originality and good grammar And gasp she wants ten pages You may be 16 years old or 60 years old but your reaction is the same Help Take heart A research paper may seem daunting but it's a far from impossible project to accomplish Turning research into writing is actually quite easy as long as you follow a few proven techniques And that's where Research Papers For Dummies steps in to help In this easy to understand guide you find out how to search for information using both traditional printed sources and the electronic treasure troves of the Internet You also discover how to take all those bits of information discarding the irrelevant ones and put them into a form that illustrates your point with clarity and originality Here's just a sampling of the topics you'll find in Research Papers For Dummies Types of research papers from business reports to dissertations The basic ingredients of a paper Introduction body conclusion footnotes and bibliography Note taking methods while doing research Avoiding plagiarism and other research paper pitfalls Defining your thesis statement and choosing a structure for your paper Supporting your argument and drawing an insightful conclusion Revising and polishing your prose Top Ten lists on the best ways to begin your research online and in print Research Papers For Dummies also includes an appendix that's full of research paper ideas if you're stuck If you're tasked with writing a research paper chances are you already have a lot of demands on your time You don't need another huge pile of papers to read This book can actually save you time in the long run because it gives you the easiest fastest and most successful methods for completing your paper

The Good Paper
Lotte Rienecker, Peter Stray Jørgensen, Signe Skov, 2013 in Danish higher education

Writing Philosophy Papers Zachary Seech, Andrew Kania, 2024-08-28 This sixth edition of Writing Philosophy Papers updates and expands one of the most popular guides to philosophical writing assignments for undergraduate students Written in a clear straightforward style the book covers everything from time management to the difference between i.e. and e.g. The heart of the book is devoted to how to write a thesis defense paper with chapters on the structure of a strong paper the process of writing and revising matters of style and usage and scholarly citation This advice is illustrated with concrete examples throughout including a complete thesis defense paper written and formatted according to the book's recommendations The book also covers how to take good notes from various kinds of philosophical sources how to write other commonly assigned kinds of papers and how to study for and take a philosophy exam A chapter on doing philosophical research contains practical advice on how to discover and access the most helpful sources for a philosophical research paper or annotated bibliography Because virtually every philosophy assignment requires a basic grasp of arguments the book ends with a chapter introducing some basic concepts

and skills for reasoning well The heart of the sixth edition has been revised and restructured to lead students even more clearly through the process of drafting revising and formatting a thesis defense paper This new edition also includes an updated completely revised and expanded chapter on citing sources giving equal consideration to print and online sources an updated completely revised and expanded chapter on doing philosophical research focused on how to find the most helpful sources for completing a philosophical research paper or annotated bibliography updated revised and greatly expanded advice on writing style and usage a completely revised and expanded treatment of good reasoning with a new discussion of inductive and abductive reasoning and new advice on how to take good notes and how to study for and take philosophy exams

How to Write a Philosophy Paper James S. Stramel,1995 *How to Write a Philosophy Paper* is a handbook which provides students with a ready arsenal of analytical and compositional techniques It is intended for undergraduate students in any type of philosophy course and is written and organized in a user friendly manner The first half includes discussions of the nature of philosophy and a variety of basic and essential techniques of philosophical enquiry and argumentation The second half takes the student step by step through the writing process from choosing a suitable topic to developing his or her thought to preparation of the final draft Includes an index and bibliographical material

African-American Perspectives and Philosophical Traditions John Pittman,John P. Pittman,1997 This collection of essays and reviews represents the most significant and comprehensive writing on Shakespeare s *A Comedy of Errors* Miola s edited work also features a comprehensive critical history coupled with a full bibliography and photographs of major productions of the play from around the world In the collection there are five previously unpublished essays The topics covered in these new essays are women in the play the play s debt to contemporary theater its critical and performance histories in Germany and Japan the metrical variety of the play and the distinctly modern perspective on the play as containing dark and disturbing elements To compliment these new essays the collection features significant scholarship and commentary on *The Comedy of Errors* that is published in obscure and difficulty accessible journals newspapers and other sources This collection brings together these essays for the first time

Introducing Ethics Justin P. McBrayer,Peter J. Markie,2014 *Introducing Ethics A Critical Thinking Approach with Readings* combines guiding commentary and questions with a rich selection of concise carefully edited and accessible readings on ethical theory and contemporary moral issues This unique introduction shows students how to do philosophy by first analyzing texts identifying ethical positions and the arguments that support them and then evaluating the truth of those positions and the soundness of the arguments In doing so it provides students with a uniquely engaging introduction to ethics that also hones their critical thinking skills **FEATURES** A unique Unit 1 gives students the conceptual tools to do philosophy with coverage of logic arguments moral reasoning and reading and writing philosophy Extensive coverage of the three main areas of ethics metaethics normative ethics and applied ethics addresses issues often ignored by other texts including ethics vs science moral responsibility moral vs legal issues torture terrorism and more Unit

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Examination Papers University of Bombay, 1927 *Writing Philosophy Papers* Zachary Seech, 1993 WRITING PAPERS IN PHILOSOPHY is an inexpensive supplement covering the various kinds of writing assignments for which many of today's students are ill prepared Teachers can rest assured that students now have the resources to learn the various skills e.g. organization documentation how to write a thesis defense or comparison and contrast paper This book will save time and frustration for everyone concerned

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Sessional Papers ... of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Ontario ... Ontario. Legislative Assembly, 1878

Working Papers in Ethics and Educational Administration, 1985 Fazal Rizvi, 1985 The Critical Review of Theological & Philosophical Literature Stewart Dingwall Fordyce Salmond, 1897 *Annual Report of the American Historical Association* American Historical Association, 1897 **Commonweal**, 1928 **Papers and Proceedings of the ... General Meeting of the American Library Association Held at ...** American Library Association. General Meeting, 1889 The Bombay University Calendar University of Bombay, 1903

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Table of Contents Example Of Philosophy Paper

1. Understanding the eBook Example Of Philosophy Paper
 - The Rise of Digital Reading Example Of Philosophy Paper
 - Advantages of eBooks Over Traditional Books
2. Identifying Example Of Philosophy Paper
 - Exploring Different Genres
 - Considering Fiction vs. Non-Fiction
 - Determining Your Reading Goals
3. Choosing the Right eBook Platform
 - Popular eBook Platforms
 - Features to Look for in an Example Of Philosophy Paper
 - User-Friendly Interface
4. Exploring eBook Recommendations from Example Of Philosophy Paper
 - Personalized Recommendations

- Example Of Philosophy Paper User Reviews and Ratings
- Example Of Philosophy Paper and Bestseller Lists
- 5. Accessing Example Of Philosophy Paper Free and Paid eBooks
 - Example Of Philosophy Paper Public Domain eBooks
 - Example Of Philosophy Paper eBook Subscription Services
 - Example Of Philosophy Paper Budget-Friendly Options
- 6. Navigating Example Of Philosophy Paper eBook Formats
 - ePub, PDF, MOBI, and More
 - Example Of Philosophy Paper Compatibility with Devices
 - Example Of Philosophy Paper Enhanced eBook Features
- 7. Enhancing Your Reading Experience
 - Adjustable Fonts and Text Sizes of Example Of Philosophy Paper
 - Highlighting and Note-Taking Example Of Philosophy Paper
 - Interactive Elements Example Of Philosophy Paper
- 8. Staying Engaged with Example Of Philosophy Paper
 - Joining Online Reading Communities
 - Participating in Virtual Book Clubs
 - Following Authors and Publishers Example Of Philosophy Paper
- 9. Balancing eBooks and Physical Books Example Of Philosophy Paper
 - Benefits of a Digital Library
 - Creating a Diverse Reading Collection Example Of Philosophy Paper
- 10. Overcoming Reading Challenges
 - Dealing with Digital Eye Strain
 - Minimizing Distractions
 - Managing Screen Time
- 11. Cultivating a Reading Routine Example Of Philosophy Paper
 - Setting Reading Goals Example Of Philosophy Paper
 - Carving Out Dedicated Reading Time
- 12. Sourcing Reliable Information of Example Of Philosophy Paper
 - Fact-Checking eBook Content of Example Of Philosophy Paper

- Distinguishing Credible Sources

13. Promoting Lifelong Learning

- Utilizing eBooks for Skill Development
- Exploring Educational eBooks

14. Embracing eBook Trends

- Integration of Multimedia Elements
- Interactive and Gamified eBooks

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