

## The Art of the Introduction

No matter what strategy you choose to begin your introduction, you should be able to relate it to your thesis. Examine each of the following samples that could be used to lead to a thesis on Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's "The Red-Headed League."

Match each sample to a strategy listed below. Note that all will not be used and some may embody a combination of strategies.

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|---------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. analogy          | 7. contrast          | 13. narration or anecdote |
| 2. analysis         | 8. definition        | 14. process               |
| 3. background       | 9. description       | 15. question & answer     |
| 4. cause-and-effect | 10. expert reference | 16. quotation             |
| 5. classification   | 11. facts/statistics | 17. summary               |
| 6. comparison       | 12. generalization   | 18. wordplay              |

\_\_\_\_\_ Famous friendships abound in history and literature -- from Damon and Pythias of mythology to David and Jonathan of the Bible. No discussion of famous friendships can be complete without considering the famous detective Sherlock Holmes and the narrator of his adventures, Dr. Watson.

\_\_\_\_\_ What makes a good mystery? Perhaps the most important quality is that of "fair play" with the reader -- no supernatural solutions, no clues hidden from his eyes, no improbable events.

\_\_\_\_\_ Based upon Jabez Wilson's story of "The Red-Headed League" and through his own observations of Wilson's house and the surrounding area, Sherlock Holmes knows that John Clay will rob the Coburg branch of the City and Suburban Bank some time shortly after ten Saturday evening. By carefully analyzing several clues, Holmes manages to solve a crime even before it happens.

\_\_\_\_\_ The mystery is a work of fiction about a puzzling crime, a number of clues, and a detective who solves the mystery.

\_\_\_\_\_ This year Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson will receive some 5,000 letters at 221B Baker Street. Groups on four continents regularly meet to study the 56 stories and four novels, as well as some 12,000 books written about Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's original 660,382 words.

\_\_\_\_\_ Sherlock Holmes begins speaking of "the curious incident of the dog in the nighttime." Suddenly, he is interrupted by his colleague Watson, who points out that "the dog did nothing in the nighttime." "That was the curious incident," remarks Holmes. This simple example shows the difference between the brilliant detective and his careless friend.

\_\_\_\_\_ The mystery is the most popular of all literature because it challenges the reader to be part detective, part eavesdropper, part diviner.

\_\_\_\_\_ Mystery stories have been appreciated at the highest levels, appealing even to our greatest presidents. Abraham Lincoln reread Edgar Allan Poe's Dupin stories regularly every year. Franklin D. Roosevelt actually became a member of the prestigious Baker Street Irregulars. John F. Kennedy relished the adventures of James Bond, Ian Fleming's superspy.

\_\_\_\_\_ "Elementary, my dear Watson." And with those words we immediately know we are in the presence of Sherlock Holmes, Holmes the know-it-all once again explaining how he knows it all to his perennially stupid companion Dr. Watson.

\_\_\_\_\_ Although Sir Arthur Conan Doyle was initially pleased with the financial success and fame that followed his creation of Sherlock Holmes, by 1893 he came to hate his master sleuth and killed him off in the foaming waters of the Reichenbach Falls. The protests of thousands of angry readers forced Doyle to resurrect Holmes.

\_\_\_\_\_ According to the modern mystery writer, Mary Roberts Rinehart, "The mystery story is two stories in one: the story of what happened and the story of what appeared to happen."

\_\_\_\_\_ Mystery stories are like jigsaw puzzles the writer creates whole, cuts into pieces, and strews in various directions. In order to solve the puzzle, the reader must imagine the finished picture, find the missing pieces, and put together the clues.