

Structuring Introductions

Opener to Problem:

1-3 sentences introducing topic to reader using a paradox, concession, anecdote, or other interesting details from your topic.

Background of the Problem:

3-4 sentences preparing the reader to understand and analyze the issue. Provide background information, introduce all parties involved, and define key terms/concepts

Current state of the problem:

2-3 sentences explaining why this topic is worth discussion. Up until now, has this topic been overlooked? Are there multiple points of view or solutions? What stance or climate do these multiple perspectives lead us to today?

Opposition to problem:

1-2 sentences explaining who disagrees with what you are about to argue. Why do they feel this way? Why are they incorrect?

Thesis:

1-2 sentences arguing your stance, how you plan on making your argument, and why your argument matters. The thesis should directly respond to the opposition's argument.

Write a paper arguing for your specific definition of “comics.” Be sure to defend your definition as well as the approach to defining the concept.

Though most comic book enthusiasts enjoy the genre for its dramatic storylines and larger-than-life action sequences, many overlook the educational function comic books provide young audiences.¹ Splashed across the comic’s brightly colored pages, lie stories of heroes and villains, triumph and defeat, good and evil. While these stories are certainly entertaining, this entertainment is merely a vehicle authors and illustrators employ to investigate issues faced by both society and the individual.² Sure, Peter Parker was Spider-Man, but he was also a high school loner; Bruce Wayne, the man behind Batman’s mask, was orphaned at a young age and swore vengeance on his parents’ murders; and the X-Men, a group of gifted and ostracized mutants, must regularly deal with societal rejection and scorn.³ A number of scholars disregard the socializing and educational effects nearly all comic books share and define the art form merely by its formal elements. Authors Randy Duncan and Matthew J. Smith define the genre as “a volume in which all aspects of the narrative are represented by pictorial and linguistic images encapsulated in sequence of juxtaposed panels and pages” (Duncan and Smith, p. 3), limiting the medium to its mere parts: pictures and words.⁴ Although comic books may physically be just this – pictures and words – they have transcended the bounds of the medium, evolving from flashy entertainment to a thoughtful meditation on our world. Thus, a revision of Duncan’s and Smith’s definition is necessary.⁵ Though comic books may physically be a collection of paneled illustrations and accompanying text through which a story is told, they must also communicate the culture’s values from which they arise and present characters and stories with which their readers can identify and empathize.⁶

¹ Notice how the opening statement matches the thesis statement (“educational function” = “communicate the culture’s values”).

² Opener to Problem: we learn how comics are more than just entertainment.

³ Background of the Problem: we can assume these particular comics will be discussed in the paper.

⁴ Current State of the Problem: other authors and their ideas are introduced.

⁵ Opposition: Duncan and Smith would probably support their limited definition over the new definition about to be suggested.

⁶ Thesis: comics should be redefined as books with educational, culturally relevant messages.