



## WRITING THE “HOOK”: REVISING YOUR INTRODUCTION

Every good thing I have written has two introductions: one for the reader, and one for myself. The former is my objective, but I inevitably begin first drafts with the latter. These rough beginnings clarify my topic and jump-start my thinking. Consider this example from an old first draft:

*Vietnamese politics in the twentieth century were long, convoluted, and determined by many outside factors.*

As the writer, I am excited by the possibilities. I am beginning a train of thought that will help me strive toward understanding.

However, as a reader, I am instantly bored. I roll my eyes and wonder whether the author will continue making lukewarm non-statements, and whether reading this is really worth my time.

My challenge is to replace my initial thoughts with a sentence introducing my finished work—to revise my work from “writer-based” to “reader-based,” as Linda Flower discussed in the article [“Revising Writer-Based Prose.”](#) I prefer to do this after my ideas are fleshed out, so I can set a tone for the whole piece. In the final draft, I replaced my previous example with a more focused, concrete statement:

*The development of a twentieth-century Vietnamese state was obstructed and sometimes wholly co-opted by the heavy-handed intervention of France, Japan, and the United States.*

My goal in the first draft is to frame my thoughts for my own benefit. My goal in the end, though, is to say something specific, titillating, and intriguing—to excite my readers about what will follow. In the first draft, the introductory sentence helps me start along the path toward understanding what I have to say. In the final draft, an introductory sentence gives the reader a clear path to the whole.

### References:

Flower, L. (1979). Writer-Based Prose: A Cognitive Basis for Problems in Writing. *College English*, 41(1), 19-37.

*By John Dunham, M.S.  
Virtual Writing Center Coordinator, Antioch University  
Writing Center Coordinator, Antioch University New England*



ANTIOCH UNIVERSITY VIRTUAL WRITING CENTER