

Writing an introduction

Writing an introduction to your book is one of the most important things you'll do in shaping your manuscript.

The introduction not only tells the reader what to expect in the book, but it sets the tone and style, establishes the book's focus and prompts the reader's trust in you as the author.

For all these reasons, writing the introduction is as helpful to you as it is to your eventual readers.

There's no "right" time to write your introduction. In some cases, you might write it early in your book's development. But more likely, you'll write the introduction after you've generated enough material that your book starts becoming clearer in your mind. Often this takes a while—you have to see how the book presents itself before you start imposing the parameters that an introduction requires.

Also, it's very likely that your introduction will evolve, just as the book does. Your first draft may change considerably as you go. But in the end, the introduction will give your readers confidence that, within this book, they'll find content worth reading.

Whether you're ready to write your introduction now or later, here's an easy way to begin:

Imagine that you're being interviewed about the book after it's published. Write your answers to the following interview questions. Put together as a whole, they'll make an excellent start on your introduction.

- What's your book about?
- What prompted you to write it?
- Who is it for?
- What was the biggest challenge you had in writing it?
- What did you learn about yourself or your topic as you wrote?
- There are many novels/memoirs/books of inspiration on the market. What makes yours unique?
- Is there anything readers need to know about how it's organized?
- What's the main thing you hope readers will take away from your book?

Happy writing!

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