

5 Effective Hooks for Introductions

The introduction for your Nevada State writing proficiency should bring in your topic, hook your audience, state your thesis, and be about as long as a 2 to 5 sentence paragraph. Here are some effective introductions showcasing 5 different types of hooks. (The thesis statement for the following prompt is underlined in each of the sample introductions).

Sample Nevada State Prompt:

People can be “rich” in more ways than just by having a great amount of money. Think of another way that you or someone you know about may be “rich” in something other than money. Explain how that person is “rich.”

1. **Background Information:** Most of the time, exam prompts offer a background information sentence – like the first sentence of the sample prompt. If you still wish to use this type of hook, you must make your background information sentence sound very different.

Many people have money and live in mansions, but not all of them can be said to be “rich.” By the same token, some people are poor, but are considered rich by the world. One way people can be wealthy is by being “rich” in character.

2. **Definition:** Many times, a prompt seems to be begging you to define its key word in a special way – like this prompt – “rich.”

The word “rich” can be used to describe not only the dollar amount in people’s bank accounts, but also the quality of their characters. People who are truly rich are wise, disciplined, and compassionate.

3. **Anecdote** (2-4 sentence story): Use this only if the story leads to a punch line, your thesis!

Three years ago my husband lost his job. As a result, we moved in with my parents and have started saving money everywhere we could. Instead of going out to eat at restaurants, we cook dinner together; instead of sending my children to daycare, my husband watches them during the day and goes back to school at night. We now spend quality time together every day. While we may not have a lot of money, we are rich in family and character.

OR

Gandhi gave a lecture once to a group of rich maharajahs asking them to give up their money and, like him, enjoy a simpler life. One by one the maharajahs began to sneak away, until all of them eventually slipped away. Gandhi later said “poor fellows, they must have been very uncomfortable in my company.” As this exchange shows, Gandhi had a very definite idea of who the “poor fellows” of the world were – and the world seems to agree. People like Gandhi, who have very few material possessions, can be wealthy if they are “rich” in character.

4. **Question:** If you are going to start with a question, avoid addressing the reader directly with “you.”

Why is it that so many people want to be rich, but so few actually are? The secret truth I wish everybody knew is that everybody can be rich. All one has to do to become truly “rich” is attain wisdom, discipline, and compassion.

5. **Quotation / Saying:** Use a quotation or a saying if you can remember one accurately.

“Earth provides enough to fill every man’s need, but not every man’s greed.” Gandhi is saying here that it is greed that makes us pursue more than the earth can offer, and that we can all afford everything we truly need. Everything we truly need to be rich is wisdom, discipline, and compassion.

Wow! All these different introductions - just for one prompt! Can you pick another prompt and do the same thing for extra credit?