INTRODUCTION SECTION

» The video that accompanies this lesson offers more insight and commentary that will help you prepare an effective narrative as part of your comprehensive mitigation strategy.

» https://youtu.be/3BKmE49Eio0

Learning Objectives:

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

» Draft a first-person Introduction (≈400—650 words) that is sincere, concise, and judge-ready.

» Convert a raw transcript into a clean opening section by guiding AI, then editing for authenticity.

» Signal full accountability without excuses and set expectations for the sections that follow.

» Add a smooth transition from the Introduction into the Background section.

» Use a repeatable "paste → generate → revise" workflow to keep voice consistent across the narrative.

Lesson Summary

This lesson demonstrates how to turn your recorded transcript into a polished **Introduction**—the first section of your sentencing narrative and the judge's first real look at your voice. The Introduction establishes purpose, tone, and credibility. You'll see how to paste a long, unformatted transcript into AI, request only the Introduction (not the entire letter), and then edit the draft to sound like a sincere human being rather than a generic template.

Purpose and length. The Introduction should be **400—650 words** and written directly to the judge in the **first person**. It explains why you are writing and what you hope the Court will understand about you. The tone must be respectful, candid, and responsibility-forward—no legal

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arguments, no minimizing, no blame-shifting. You should expect the prosecutor to spin a story that gets the judge to focus on the crime. That is the prosecutor's job. Don't be surprised. Instead, focus on your role, which is to show that you have a full appreciation for the magnitude of problems that exist, and that you're on a path to work toward something better.

Accountability over explanation. In the accompanying video to this lesson, you'll see model introduction highlights several elements that judges repeatedly respond to:

> » (1) an unequivocal statement of wrongdoing,
> » (2) recognition of how your conduct harmed others and society at large,
> » (3) an honest description of how your thinking was flawed at the time, and
> » (4) specific signals of growth (e.g., reflection, study, therapy, sobriety). I encourage you to name the sources that inspired your change—books, mentors, programs

Strive for authenticity, helping the judge get to know you better.

Workflow: paste → generate → revise. Start by pasting your full transcript (even if it is one long block) into your AI workspace. Use your structured prompt to ask for only the Introduction within the defined word range. When AI returns a draft, copy it into your working document, check the word count, and read it out loud. Edit to remove any "AI-ish" phrasing (vague generalities, clichés, over-formal stock language). Insert your name and the judge's name, fix any awkward sentences, and replace generic claims with specific details from your transcript.

Add a purposeful transition. End the Introduction by telling the judge exactly what comes next. A one-to-two sentence bridge that previews the **Background** ("In the following pages, I will share my upbringing, education, and work history, the influences that led to my offense, the lessons I've learned, and the steps I'm taking to make things right...") signals organization and helps the reader track your narrative.

Quality control. Use a quick checklist:
> » Is it first-person and sincere?
> » Does it avoid legal argument?

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- » Does it clearly accept responsibility (or, if preserving appellate rights, use an appellate-safe framing without discussing the offense facts)?
- » Does it acknowledge harm?
- » Is the word count in range?
- » Does it end with a clear transition?

By mastering this workflow on the Introduction, you create a repeatable pattern for the remaining sections: generate only what you need, revise for authenticity, and keep the judge in mind as your audience of one.

Key Takeaways

- » Keep the Introduction first-person, sincere, and 400—650 words.
- » Own the conduct and its impact; eliminate excuses and vague language.
- » Use the paste → generate → revise loop; never ask AI for the entire letter at once.
- » End with a clear transition that previews the Background section.
- » Read out loud and "de-AI-ify" to preserve your authentic voice.

Self-Directed Exercise

1. Generate the Intro: Paste your transcript into your AI prompt and request only the Introduction (400—650 words).

2. Revise for Authenticity: Replace any generic phrasing with specifics from your life; ensure clear ownership and acknowledgement of harm.

3. Add a Transition: Write a 1—2 sentence bridge that previews the Background.

4. Read Aloud & Finalize: Apply the "de-AI-ify" checklist (first-person, no legal argument, no minimization, clear transition). Save as Narrative_Intro_v1_YYYY-MM-DD.docx.

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Assessment Questions

1. What is the recommended word range for the Introduction, and why is staying within it helpful to the judge?

2. Multiple choice: Which line best fits a judge-ready Introduction?

    ◊ a) "My lawyer will explain why the government is wrong."

    ◊ b) "I accept that my choices broke the law and harmed others, and I am responsible for those choices."

    ◊ c) "I didn't mean to do anything illegal, and others were more to blame."

    ◊ d) "I reserve all legal arguments for appeal and therefore cannot express remorse."

3. Name two edits you would make to remove "AI-ish" tone from a draft.

4. True/False: It's better to ask AI for the full narrative at once to keep consistency.

5. Write a one-sentence transition that closes your Introduction and previews what your Background section will cover.

Sample Introduction (from my transcript/video)

Dear Honorable Judge Tanner,

I write this letter with deep humility and sincerity. My purpose is to acknowledge the bad decisions I made, to accept full responsibility for them, and to provide you with an honest account of who I am today. This sentencing narrative is not an attempt to excuse or rationalize my conduct. Instead, it is my effort to speak directly to the Court and to show that I understand the seriousness of my crime, the damage I caused, and the responsibility I must bear.

I recognize that when a person stands before the Court, the prosecutor will present a version of the story that highlights failures and wrongdoing. That is their role, and in my case, they will not be exaggerating when they describe the seriousness of my crime. I violated the law by choosing to traffic

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cocaine, and in doing so, I harmed not only those who became involved with me but every member of society. In the United States, each of us has an obligation to live within the law, and when I broke that obligation, I failed as a citizen. I did not have a substance abuse problem. My problem was a flaw in character, arrogance, and reckless thinking. I take full responsibility for that.

It has taken me time—and painful reflection—to come to terms with the truth of my actions. Early on, I convinced myself that if I did not personally carry drugs, I was somehow less responsible. That was not only wrong, it was dishonest. I was the one who organized and directed the conduct. I corrupted others by involving them in my scheme. I turned away from opportunities to live responsibly, and instead, I pursued a path that ended with me in custody. I cannot undo those choices, but I can be truthful about them.

While in custody, particularly during my time in solitary confinement, I have had to confront the consequences of my conduct. I have reflected on the shame I caused my family, the harm I brought upon my community, and the reality that my actions created victims far beyond the people I directly dealt with. Reading philosophy and history—works like Plato's *Republic* and Thoreau's *Social Contract*—opened my eyes to what it means to be a citizen with duties to others, not just to myself. Those writings helped me see clearly that I had lived selfishly and irresponsibly, and that my decisions betrayed the trust that society places in each of us.

I cannot change the past, but I can change how I respond to it. This letter is one way I begin to do so—by showing honesty, by expressing remorse, and by making a commitment to live differently moving forward. I want the Court to know that I am not hiding from what I did. I am facing it directly, with full awareness that the sentence I receive will reflect the seriousness of my crime. My only hope is that by being candid and accountable, I can demonstrate that I am serious about reforming my life and becoming someone who contributes rather than harms.

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to address the Court in this way. In the following pages, I will provide more detail about my life. I will share the background that shaped me, the influences that led me into criminal conduct, the lessons I have learned since, and the steps I am taking to reconcile with society.

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