Introduction Paragraph – MLA Example

Many films have detailed the life of Zheng He and Emperor Yongle, chronicling the success of the seven voyages of the Ming Dynasty. *1421: The Year China Discovered America?* has some brief focus on Zheng He, but the main points of the film concentrate around large claims—occasionally making generalizations and speculations that have very little to do with what actually was relevant to China at the time. An explanation of these Chinese voyages are summarized in sweeping generalizations, narrowing on only the minutest details. From *1421*, gaining much perspective of the real men who led and were responsible for these voyages becomes close to impossible. Instead, the focus diverts to other key players whose significance in the voyages is highly controversial. The scattered focus, wild speculations, and grandiose claims make finding a cohesive history of the Ming dynasty’s maritime ventures extremely difficult. A concentration on the social history (i.e., the life of Zheng He and the exploits of Emperor Yongle) of the Ming Dynasty voyages rather than a broad summarization of people and events that may or may not have happened allows for a deeper, and clearer, understanding of the time period, the social restrictions, and how events actually played out.

The opening sentence provides generalized context that introduces the subject of the paper.

The introduction provides brief, relevant background information to the topic and narrows towards the thesis statement.

Avoid using quotes in the introduction unless you are told otherwise or you feel it is absolutely necessary.

The thesis statement (which here is underlined for emphasis) is placed at the end of the paragraph, highlighting the content of the paper (which here are bolded).

From the thesis, the reader knows the paper will discuss the time period, the social restrictions, and how events actually played out in the context of the social history of the Ming Dynasty voyages.