What does a good introduction paragraph look like? See the rubric on the first page for instructions. The first paragraph represents a good introduction and the second paragraph represents a poor introduction.

The following paragraph answers the question “In Eiichiro Azuma’s *Between Two Empires: Race, History, and Transnationalism in Japanese America*, were first-generation Japanese Americans more likely influenced by Japanese governmental officials when forming their opinions and attitudes about their place and role in America or were they more likely to form their attitudes and opinions based on their daily experiences in the United States?”

In *Between Two Empires*, Azuma demonstrated that Japanese government officials influenced the opinions and attitudes formed by first-generation Japanese Americans (Issei) more than the Issei’s daily contact with white American culture. It is clear from the text that the Issei’s attitudes toward America formed in large part due to Japanese government polices promoting moral reform, racial uplift, and, later, Japanese-language education. The Japanese government’s insistence on moral reform constantly stressed the “individual character” and morality of the Issei and implored them to avoid “irresponsible and careless behavior” so that they could “elevate [their] individual character and moralize [the Issei] community” (47). Issei also believed the Japanese government’s rhetoric on equality between white Americans and Japanese immigrants and the superiority of both races to immigrants from other races. This promoted the Issei “pioneer thesis” that purged the “undesirable aspects” of their immigrant past and promoted historical distortions “invoking favorable group images” that distanced the Issei “from other minority groups in the American west” (100, 104). Later, the Japanese state funded and provided teachers to Japanese language schools, which introduced Japan-centric concepts such as “emperor worship” and Neo-Confucian morality to the Issei’s children (Nisei). Language schools allowed the Japanese state to reinforce their idealized views of the Japanese race on the Issei under the guise educating the next generation (126). Although American culture (including its harsh racism) surrounded the immigrants, the Issei stuck closer to themselves in their jobs, ghettos, and in cultural groups, thus limiting American cultural influences, which allowed the Japanese state to exert greater influence on the Issei. Understanding the Japanese state’s successes influencing their subjects in America can tell us a great deal about how governments establish and bind their power and influence to first-generation immigrants abroad.
The attitudes of immigrants are often influenced heavily by their current surroundings and the lives they had in their native lands. After all, aren’t we as humans products of our pasts and our presents? Eiichiro Azuma’s *Between two Empires: Race, History, and Transnationalism in Japanese America* studies the influences that molded and shaped the minds of the Issei after they immigrated to the United States between 1880 and 1924. Dr. Azuma demonstrates that factors from both home (Japan) and abroad (America) influenced the opinions and attitudes of the Issei. In the end, their experiences in America were more important than directives coming from Japan because America was their home. Japanese Americans faced a daily onslaught of racism, exclusion, and hatred while their children were forced to suffer through the attitude-bending humiliation of the “Americanization” programs foisted on them in American schools. The Japanese government didn’t have any abilities to stop this type of offensive racism outside of declaring war on the United States—something it was wholly unprepared to do. It is important to understand the shame and humiliation felt by these brave Japanese pioneers so we can better understand the hardships they faced.