

Topic: Introductions & Conclusions

Purpose (*Introductions*)

- The purpose of an introduction is to bring the reader into the perspective of the writer, build interest in the subject, and announce the topic.
- Introductions are a preview to your paper, alerting the reader about key points.
- Although some write the intro first, it may be easier to write it last (since you'll then know what your paper is about).

Step one: The “hook”

- Introductions should be brief (about 7-10 sentences).
- Introductions should begin with a “hook” which can include:
 - Interesting details
 - Statistics (Limit the amount. Too many can be overwhelming.)
 - An anecdote
 - A fact
 - A surprising statement
- Keep the “hook” to about 2-3 sentences

Step two: Necessary components

- After you catch the reader’s attention, you can begin to introduce your topic.
- Additional components that should be in the introduction include:
 - Thesis statement (*see Thesis Statements*)
 - Preview statement
 - Preview statement contains your main ideas. This may be a separate statement from the thesis statement or can be part of the thesis statement.
 - Provide any helpful or relevant information on the topic.
 - You can give a bit of context, but save the argument for the essay!
 - Ask yourself “does this introduce my argument or prove it?” True evidence or proof deserves its own paragraph.
 - You may want to show credibility by alerting the reader to both sides of the argument.
 - Avoid clichés. Please.
- Remember: Do not feel pressured to write your introduction first. After all, it is a preview, and how will you know what your essay will be about if you haven’t written it yet?

Purpose (*Conclusions*)

- Conclusions alert the reader that the end of your paper is near.

- Conclusions can either reflect backward or forward.
- Conclusions “wrap-up” your paper and leave the reader with a complete idea of your discussion.
- Do not bring up new ideas in the conclusion.
- Be brief, about 5-7 sentences.

Step one: Looking backward

- Do not simply restate your thesis and main points.
- You may *summarize* the main points to remind the reader what was discussed.
- Emphasize important points you want the reader to remember.
- Come full circle by referring to something in the introduction.

Step two: Looking forward

- You may pose a question for the reader to consider.
- Point the reader to future recommendations.
- Offer advice or suggest actions based on your discussion, argument, or proposal.