

Introductions & Conclusions

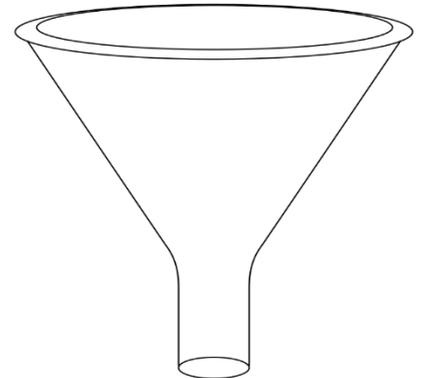
While it is tempting to you write your introduction right away, it can be easier, and more focused, if you wait until you have finished the body of your essay. Here are some additional tips.

Introductory paragraphs usually open with a hook, something that grabs the reader's attention. Some ways to do this are:

- open with an interesting or surprising fact,
- ask a thoughtful question,
- use an interesting example or anecdote, or
- begin with a relevant quotation.
- DON'T begin with a dictionary definition. In college, this is too simplistic.

Introductory paragraphs give important background information that helps the reader understand the thesis statement.

- Ask yourself, "What does the reader need to know about the topic? What information do I need to provide?"
- Do not give too many details. Focus on important information.
- Do not begin your argument yet. That will happen in the body of your essay.
- Think of this section as a funnel, beginning with general information and moving toward the more specific information you give in your thesis.



Introductory paragraphs usually end with a thesis statement. A successful thesis statement:

- presents the controlling idea of the essay,
- responds to the assignment,
- contains an idea that the writer will develop (explain) and support,
- does more than state a fact; usually presents an arguable assertion and claim.
- Think of the thesis as the beginning of the narrow mouth of the funnel. It focuses on your claim. Throughout the essay, you will stick to this narrow focus.

For more information on creating a thesis statement, see the Writing Center Handouts "Developing Your Thesis" and "Making a Claim."

Plan your introduction

1. Choose the fact, question, example, or quotation that will hook your reader.

2. List background and general information you need to include in your introduction.

3. Write a draft of your thesis statement.

Conclusions usually restate the thesis of the essay in different words.

- Restating the thesis leaves readers with a clear sense of the author’s main points.
- Just as your introduction moves from the general to the specific [your thesis], the conclusion works in the reverse, moving from the specific back out to the general.
- Do not just repeat your thesis. Use different words to express the same idea.

Use a concluding strategy to end your essay. Some strategies are:

- Look to the future. How will things change?
- Encourage readers or other specific people to act. What can they do to improve the situation?
- Present an alternate point of view. Remind readers again why an opposing view is incorrect. If no position is entirely right or wrong, mention the opposing view and its value.
- Explain the significance of the topic. How does this topic matter to society and to the reader? What are the implications for individuals and/or society?
- Place the issue in a larger context. This approach reverses the funnel that you used in the introduction, taking the reader from the focus of the essay back out to the general.
- Connect the end to the beginning of your essay. If you began with a question, you can answer it here. Remind readers of the quote, fact, or example you used to hook readers. Finish the anecdote (or give an alternate ending that applies the information from the essay).

Plan Your Conclusion

1. Write the sentence(s) that will remind your reader of your thesis statement.

2. What strategy will you use to close the essay?
