



EBERLY WRITING STUDIO:

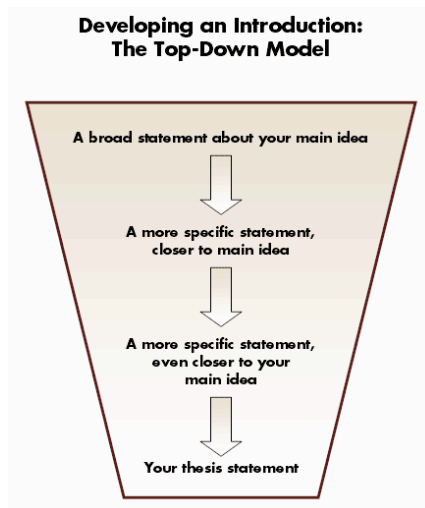
HOW TO WRITE AN EFFECTIVE INTRODUCTION AND CONCLUSION*

It is essential that every paper that you write include an introductory and concluding paragraph. Listed below are effective ways to hook your audience, tell the purpose of your paper, and synthesize your information with logic.

Here is a sample outline of what to include in an introduction: I.

Introduction

- A. Attention getter
- B. Transition between attention-getter and thesis
- C. Thesis



The Attention Getter: The hook is an introductory device that serves to secure the reader's interest in the subject of the essay. It usually precedes the thesis statement, and it is a crucial part of your paper because it sets the first impression of your work. For that reason, ample time should be spent formulating a thoughtful one. Here are some ways to grab readers' attention at the beginning:

1. **A historical review** prepares the readers by giving them needed background information.
2. **An interesting, brief story or anecdote** captures readers' attention immediately.
3. **Pertinent statistics** often surprise readers.
4. **Provocative questions** allow readers to become part of the speech or essay.
5. **Quotes** provide well-phrased, interesting remarks for readers to consider.
6. **Going from general to the specific** is a good way to take the readers from the familiar to the less familiar.
7. **Analogies** are useful for reader comprehension.
8. **Defining terms** used throughout the essay also aids in reader comprehension.
9. **Literary devices** such as metaphors, similes, personifications, etc., creatively draw readers in.

*Adapted from: LEO (Literacy Education Online) and Word-crafter.net

What to avoid in introductory paragraphs:

- Don't be too obvious. Avoid statements such as, "In this paper..." or "This assignment says...."
- Don't apologize. Avoid saying, "I'm not sure..." or "This paper will attempt...."
- Don't use clichés or overused expressions, such as, "A penny saved is a penny earned."
- Don't ask questions that can be answered.

Conclusion: Concluding paragraphs are also very important. They serve to make a logical ending to your discussion. An ending too abrupt leaves your reader suddenly cut off. On the other hand, you can't just tack on a paragraph and call it quits. An ending that flows gracefully and sensibly reinforces your ideas and enhances a strong essay.

This is a common format for a closing (will vary based on type of paper):

1. Find new words to communicate your restated thesis.
2. Summarize main points in a brief and concise way.
3. Use references to the hook, but avoid using the same device in the conclusion.

III. Conclusion*

- A. **Restatement** of the thesis
- B. **Summary** of main points
- C. **Clincher**
 1. Answer the question "so what?"
 2. Synthesize your ideas.
 3. Challenge the reader.
 4. Look to the future.

What to avoid in the conclusion:

- Don't introduce a new idea or go off track.
- Don't reword your introduction. The introduction and conclusion should not be interchangeable.
- Don't announce what you have done. Avoid saying, "This proves that..." or "I have tried to show you that...."
- Don't make absolute claims. Avoid saying, "This proves that..."; always qualify your message.
- Avoid logical fallacies. Conclusions are vulnerable to errors in reasoning.
- Don't apologize or speak tentatively. Avoid saying, "Even though I'm not an expert...." You want your readers to respect your stance, not question it!

*Examples at LEO's strategies for writing a conclusion: <http://leo.stcloudstate.edu/acadwrite/conclude.html>