



## Introductions and Conclusions

Introductions and conclusions are important components of any essay. They work to book-end the argument made in the body paragraphs by first explaining what points will be made (in the introduction) and then summarizing what points were made (in the conclusion).

An **introduction** works to let your reader know what he or she can expect from your paper. Your introduction should grab your reader's attention, introduce your topic, and explain your purpose.

1. Begin your introduction with a **"hook"** that grabs your reader's attention and introduces the general topic. You can do this with an interesting quotation (that you must cite), an anecdote that captures the topic, a rhetorical question, a direct statement, or an attention-grabbing fact or statistic.
2. Next, make **a statement or two about the more focused topic** that the paper will expand on. This part of the introduction can include background on the topic that helps to establish its context.
3. Finally, include your **thesis statement**. This statement should include your specific topic, your opinion/claim about that topic, and typically, the reasons you have for making that claim. This statement should be packaged so that if it were to stand on its own, it would let your reader know your specific topic, the claim you make about that topic, and the reasons you have for making that claim.

Direct,  
attention-  
grabbing hook.

### Sample Introduction

I am a movie fanatic. When friends want to know what picture won the Oscar in 1980, or who played the police chief in *Jaws*, they ask me. My friends, though, have stopped asking me if I want to go out to the movies. I am no longer excited about going to the theatre to watch the next great movie. I have decided that the idea of going to the movie theater to see a movie is overrated because of the problems in getting to the theater, the theater itself, and the behavior of some patrons.

Adapted from *College Writing Skills with Readings*

Statements about the more focused topic that lead up to the claim made in the thesis statement.

Thesis statement that makes a claim ("going to the movie theater to see a movie is overrated") and provides reasons (there are "problems in getting to the theater, the theater itself, and the behavior of some patrons").

A **conclusion** works to remind your reader of the claim and main points of your paper and summarizes what you want your reader to “take away” from your argument. Consider these tips when writing your conclusion:

1. Begin with your **rephrased thesis statement** to remind your reader of the point of your paper.

**Summarize** the points you made in your paper and show how they support your argument; tie all the pieces of your paper together.

2. Tell your reader what **the significance of your argument** might be. Do you want your reader to think differently, question something, or perform some action? **Make a recommendation** of what your reader should “do” with the information you just gave them.

Thesis  
statement  
rephrased.

#### Sample Conclusion

My experience will stay with me long after I head back to school and spend my wages on books and beer. The things that factory work has taught me – how lucky I am to get an education, how to work hard, how easy it is to lose that work once you have it – are by no means earth-shattering. Everyone has to come to grips with them at some point. How and when I learned these lessons, however, has inspired me to make the most of my college years before I enter the real world for good. Until then, the summer months I spend in the factories will be long, tiring and every bit as educational as a French-lit class.

Summary of the main  
ideas conveyed  
throughout the paper.

Adapted from “Some Lessons from the Assembly Line” by Andrew Brassksma in *Steps to Writing Well with Additional Readings*.

Significance of the  
points made  
throughout the  
essay.

After you have written your own conclusion, **ask yourself**:

If my readers were to only read my conclusion, would they understand my paper’s purpose?  
Do I summarize my argument for my readers?  
Do I answer the question “So what, who cares?”  
Do I tie all of my points together?