

Improving Your Own Writing Style – Introductions/Conclusions

Why bother writing a good introductions and conclusion?

1. **You never get a second chance to make a first impression.** The opening paragraph of your paper will provide your readers with their initial impressions of your argument, your writing style, and the overall quality of your work. A concise, engaging, and well-written introduction will start your readers off thinking highly of you, your analytical skills, and your writing.
2. **Your introduction is an important road map for the rest of your paper.** Your introduction conveys a lot of information to your readers. You can let them know what your topic is, why it is important, and how you plan to proceed with your discussion. It should contain a thesis.
3. **Ideally, your introduction will make your readers want to read your paper.** The introduction should also capture your readers' interest, making them want to read the rest of your paper.
4. **Your conclusion will make sure the reader remembers your main ideas.** You wrote for a reason, and you want your reader to remember what you said. However, they just read a lot of words, so you need to highlight the your main points again.
5. **Your conclusion leaves the reader thinking.** You want the reader to remember your ideas for the long term. The only way people really remember things for the long term is if they're interested in them. Make them interested to think more about your topic.

The Components of an Effective Introduction and Conclusion

1. Intro: Open with an **attention getter (aka “hook,” “lead,” “grabber”)**. Sometimes, especially if the topic of your paper is somewhat dry or technical, opening with something catchy can help.
 - an intriguing example
 - a provocative quotation
 - a puzzling scenario
 - a vivid and perhaps unexpected anecdote
 - a thought-provoking question
 - parallelism
 - simple sentences
 - strategic use of punctuation (Jedi-knight)
2. Intro: Follow your lead with **context that connects your hook to your thesis statement**. This is usually 3 – 4 sentences depending on the length of your final paper.
3. Intro: Conclude your introduction paragraph with a **strong thesis statement**. A strong thesis statement...
 - **directly answers the question asked of you.**
 - **is a road map for the paper.** It previews to content of the body paragraphs.
 - **answers the “so what?”** In other words, what is the significance of your topic.
 - **is straightforward and confident.** Avoid statements like "In this paper..." Assert your main argument confidently. After all, you can't expect your reader to believe it if it doesn't sound like you believe it.
 - **is usually one sentence.** Usually.
4. Conclusion: Summary of your main ideas. This is a few sentences that repeat the main ideas of your paper. You eliminate the details and just restate the main ideas.
5. Conclusion: Clincher. This is a sentence or two that relates back to you attention getter, but is interesting enough that the reader will always remember how you ended the paper.

Introduction Task 1: Circle one of the following leads to use as the hook for your Megan Meier Explication essay. If you would like to compose your own, feel free (write it on the lines below).

1. A vivid anecdote

Katy's "friends" started swearing at her, saying she was doing horrible things with her boyfriend. They called her fat and ugly. They threatened to physically hurt her. People who she trusted as her friends turned on her, bullying her harshly on the bus and at school. Katy is eleven.

2. A provocative quotation

"If you bully somebody face to face, and they get upset, you see them cry and be hurt. When it's over the Internet, you can't see the emotional reaction and go along thinking it's no big deal." - Robin Kowalski, PhD, Department of Psychology, Clemson University

3. A provocative statistic

According to a study conducted by i-Safe America, a non-profit foundation dedicated to internet safety education, 53% of kids admit having said something mean or hurtful to another person online. That means in a traditional classroom of twenty-eight students, fifteen people are guilty of cyberbullying.

Explain why you picked what you did. _____

Introduction Task 2: Connect your hook with your thesis. In other words, what can you say between your hook and thesis that will create a logical progression of ideas.

Introduction Task 3: Since you are answering the question, "Why does Leonard Pitts use certain types of rhetorical appeals in his editorial "Megan Meier and the MySpace 'Joke'?", your thesis needs to reflect that answer. You may use the following formula. If you would like to compose your own, feel free (write it on the back of this paper).

Fill in the blanks: In the _____, _____, author

medium

title of text being explicated

_____ uses _____ and _____ to convince his audience that

first name

last name

1st paragraph

2nd paragraph

_____ state author's message here

Conclusion Task 1: In the box, re-write the thesis above but organize it and word it differently. Then, write one sentence about the effectiveness (or non-effectiveness) of each appeal. *There will be 3 sentences in this box.*

Conclusion Task 2: Circle the clincher below that relates to the hook you chose above. If you would like to compose your own, feel free (write it on the lines below).

1. A vivid anecdote

Remember Katy, an eleven year old girl without the wisdom or courage to stand up for herself, she got lucky. Her parents were “nosy”, as all good parents are, and discovered the root of Katy’s sudden shift in mood for the worse. They talked with Katy and offered her words of advice that only parents can. Katy was lucky.

2. A provocative quotation

Dr. Kowalski explained why individuals find it easier, more acceptable even, to bully someone over the internet when bullying goes against all moral standards. One would think adults, parents even, would not need to hear this analysis to keep their jeering words from a child’s computer screen.

3. A provocative statistic

If 53% of kids admit they have said mean things to others online, then whenever a kid walks in to a room they are more likely to be a cyberbully than not. That’s not the statistic a generation wants to be remembered for.

Explain why you picked what you did. _____

Homework:

1. Type this above introduction and conclusion into the document with your two body paragraphs.
2. Print your 4-paragraph essay.
3. Submit to turnitin.com. Do NOT print the originality report. I will check them online.
4. Bring your finished paper to school on Monday and turn it in to me!
5. Pat yourself on the back for finishing your work on time. (Don’t forget that late papers are penalized. Consult your bright green sheet I gave you at the beginning of the semester for details).