

Writing Introductory and Concluding Paragraphs

Introductory paragraphs should accomplish two tasks:

- 1) They should **GRAB YOUR READERS' ATTENTION** so they will want to read on;
and
- 2) They should let the readers know what the paper is going to be about.

* To grab your readers' attention, you need to begin with a **HOOK**:

- a) a dramatic opening/surprise opening
- b) a mystery
- c) a question
- d) an alliterative opening
- e) a quotation

* Next, you need a **BRIDGE**:

A bridge is just a sentence that identifies what you're talking about (the issue/topic) and leads into the summary.

* Next, you need a **SUMMARY**:

The summary gives the necessary background information that someone who doesn't know anything about the topic would need to know for the paper to make sense. Be brief. Maybe two sentences here.

* Finally, *to let your readers know what your paper is going to be about*, you should craft a "**THESIS STATEMENT**."

A thesis statement is to a paper what a topic sentence is to a paragraph. The thesis statement will be the **LAST** sentence of your **FIRST** paragraph.

It is a powerful sentence that directly answers the assignment's question. It should include the subject and your opinion (without saying "In my opinion" or "I think").

So, the introductory paragraph will begin with some kind of opener to grab your readers' attention and will end with your thesis statement.

Concluding paragraphs are the last thing your readers will see, so they should be strong. In your concluding paragraph, you should do the following:

1. Restate your thesis using fresh words. Don't just restate your thesis using the same words. It's robotic and irritating. Use fresh language to state the same idea. One way to do this is to use this structure: Considering (body topic #1) and (body topic #2), it is clear that...
2. Mention what is most important (and why it's most important). This is the "So what?" portion of your paper. Why does any of this matter anyway? Explain the bigger reason why the reader should care. This can be done in 1 - 2 sentences.
3. Leave the reader with a "kicker" or a lingering thought. This last sentence of your paper should leave the reader nodding in agreement with you and feeling glad s/he read your paper. If you're stumped for a kicker, use a famous quote that connects to your paper. Another idea is to END your paper the same way you began it. If you began with a mystery, end with the answer. If you began with a quote, use the rest of the quote for the ending.

The concluding paragraph is also an excellent place to put information that you would've liked to use in your paper but for which there wasn't a place. You can mention that information here, carefully!

EXAMPLE: (intro)

When people think of heroes, they usually think of soldiers or civil servants fighting to save their country. What they do not think of are doctors fighting to save their patients. Edward Jenner made one of the most important contributions to the world. Through his training and his devotion to his research, he found the vaccine to the world's greatest killer in the 1800s, smallpox. The youngest of eight children and orphaned as a child, he strove to achieve the respect of family and friends. Diligently aiming to achieve one of the greatest goals in history, he became the master of smallpox.

(conclusion)

With devotion and tenacity, Edward Jenner attained an unthinkable objective: he conquered the epidemic of smallpox. Building his career on his training, he was devoted to his hunt and eventually found the vaccine. This was an immense, humble public service. He never let the ridicule, slander, or doubt of others stop him from achieving this great discovery. For this reason, Jenner has earned his notable place in history because he is the reason smallpox no longer threatens human life.