

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 rhetorical question (avoid this one because it is so overused)
- 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**:

Because you are assuming your audience has seen your film, this is not *necessarily* a summary of the movie, but it could be. The summary gives the necessary background information that someone who doesn't know about the topic will 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 a structure like the following: "Considering (body topic #1) and (body topic #2), clearly... (statement of your conclusion)."
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 she or 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 part of 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!