

Introductions and Conclusions



Introductions:

An introduction is used to do just that, introduce the topic! The length should be directly proportional to the length of your paper, meaning that if you have a paper that is only two pages long, you don't want more than a paragraph of introduction. Likewise, if you have a thirty page paper, you will need more than a page of introduction. Customarily, a typical introductory paragraph for a simple 3-10 page paper shouldn't be more than one paragraph.

It is important to avoid "announcing" your topic by writing such phrases as "In this paper I will discuss..." or "This essay will deal with...." Instead, begin your introduction with a "grabber," a sentence that will capture your reader's attention. This can be done in several ways:

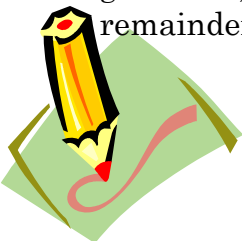
1. A Direct Approach
2. A Surprising Fact
3. A Definition
4. A Narrative
5. A Background Statement
6. A Contradiction
7. A Question
8. A Quotation

Ultimately, your introductory paragraph should start with the general topic and work to the specific goal of your paper presented in your thesis statement. The thesis statement, which is typically the last sentence of your introductory paragraph, informs your reader of the exact information you will look at in your paper and the order in which it is discussed.

Sample Introduction:

The English language, which has survived countless wars during its evolution from Old English to its present state, is facing a new battle against technology. The recent advances in computers and cell phones are changing the face of communication and influencing the progression of the English language. In a few quick keystrokes, a person may send a message instantaneously to someone on the other side of the globe. Cellular telephones, instant messages, and e-mails leave many in search of shortcuts to reduce the number of characters necessary to produce the message. With the ever-advancing age of technology and the increasing use of shorthand in text messages and computer usage, the grammar of the English language is suffering.

In this sample, notice the way the author pulls the reader into the text through the direct statement that the English language is battling technology. Beyond that, each sentence continues to introduce the impact that technology is having on grammar, building to the thesis statement which provides the details for the remainder of the paper.





Conclusions:

A conclusion is your opportunity to wrap up everything that you presented within the body of the paper. Basically, it is the time to reiterate your thesis statement with a bit more detail than you used in the introduction. Be careful not to simply restate the exact words of your introduction, and do not supply any new information that would need to be developed further. Finally, do not use any overused phrases that announce the closing of the essay (i.e. In summary, In conclusion).

Some suggestions for your conclusion:

1. Restating your Thesis
2. A Narrative
3. A Question/Series of Questions
4. A Recommendation
5. A Quotation (with caution)

Ultimately, your conclusion should echo the main point in your thesis statement. It can be relatively short and should not involve any new information.

Sample Conclusion:

Communication, like the English language, has evolved to include the use of cellular telephones, e-mail, and instant messages. The question that arises is whether or not the language has evolved in a negative way. Attention must be paid to how society manipulates the English language because language reflects the values and maturity of its respective culture. It is true this battle between language and technology is one of many for the English language; however this is a battle that must be won.

In this sample, the author reiterates the thesis statement while recapping the general argument of the paper. Notice that no new information is discussed, and there are no statements that require additional explanation. This paper concludes on a firm note and leaves the reader with a strong understanding of the information covered in the paper.

