



The Catholic University of America
Writing Center Handout

Introductions and Conclusions

Introductions

Purpose: to engage your reader and clearly state your argument.

Introductions often have **three sections**:

1. A **“hook”** that *grabs your reader’s attention* and/or *gives your topic context*.
2. An **explanation** of why your topic is important, to *motivate* your reader to keep reading.
3. Your **thesis statement**.

A **“hook”** is a sentence or two that catches your reader’s attention. If you use a hook, it should come at the very beginning of the introduction.

Some types of “hooks”:

- a surprising statistic, fact, or example
- a paradoxical statement (something that seems like it couldn’t be true, but is)
- a question or bit of dialogue
- an analogy (how your topic is like something else)
- an anecdote (brief story)

A **thesis statement** is a brief summary of the point you are going to argue in your essay. Making your thesis statement the very last sentence of the introduction gives it extra force.

For more on developing a strong thesis statement, see the handout titled “The Thesis Statement.”

What to avoid in your Introduction:

- Hiding your thesis statement in the middle of a paragraph
- Getting too detailed about your argument (save details for the body!)
- Including useless information about the topic.

For more information, see:

Brizee, Allen. "Introductions, Body Paragraphs, and Conclusions for Argument Papers." *The OWL at Purdue*. Purdue University, 15 September 2008. Web. 6 May 2009.

Hacker, Diana. *A Writer's Reference*. 6th ed. Boston and New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2007.

Conclusions

Purpose: To drive home your point and round out your essay. Conclusions restate what you said in the introduction **but add something more**.

Like Introductions, Conclusions often have three sections:

1. Restatement of your thesis (but NOT in exactly the same words!).
2. Restatement of your key points.
3. Something broader for your reader to go away thinking about.

That "something broader" can take many forms. Here are some to consider:

- A call for further action on your topic.
- Advice for others dealing with your topic.
- Unsolved questions about your topic that others should address in the future.
- A reminder to your readers about why your topic is important.

Like Introductions, Conclusions can also contain a "hook." Some possibilities include:

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- Restating something from your introduction to give your readers a sense of coming full circle.
- A quotation or bit of dialogue.
- An anecdote.
- A funny or ironic comment.

What to avoid in your Conclusion:

- Introducing new ideas or arguments
- Apologizing for your argument
- Leaving your argument open to interpretation.

For more information, see:

Brizee, Allen. "Introductions, Body Paragraphs, and Conclusions for Argument Papers." *The OWL at Purdue*. Purdue University, 15 September 2008. Web. 6 May 2009.

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For further information, please use the following links via Purdue OWL:

https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/common_writing_assignments/argument_papers/index.html

https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/common_writing_assignments/argument_papers/conclusions.html