

The Writing Center
Handout: Introduction and Conclusion Paragraphs

Introduction Paragraphs

What is an introduction and why do I need one? The introductory paragraph provides readers with the first impression of your paper. Therefore, it needs to be both interesting and informative. This paragraph aims to grab the reader’s attention, provide an overview of the topic, and present the main idea of your essay.

Three Elements of an Introduction Paragraph

Element	Options
Open with a hook/attention grabber. The hook is the first sentence of the essay and should catch the reader’s attention, making them want to read the rest of the paper.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Surprising or controversial statement 2. Provocative quotation 3. Vivid and perhaps unexpected anecdote 4. Thought-provoking question
Narrow down the topic, providing an overview of what you will discuss. Here you want to move from the broad topic introduced in the hook to a more specific topic that you will discuss in the essay.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Background or history on the subject. 2. Show the different perspectives on a controversial topic. 3. Tell an extended interesting anecdote. 4. Define a term that is essential to your topic. 5. Pose several questions. 6. Present the opposing side. <p>* If you are writing a summary/response essay, this section of your introduction will be the summary of the article.</p>
State your thesis, the main idea of your essay. Your thesis should include the topic of your essay plus the controlling idea (your point about the topic).	<p>A good thesis has several qualities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 1-2 complete sentences at the end of the introduction 2. Takes a side and is debatable 3. Not a fact 4. Not an announcement. I.e. This essay will discuss... 5. Very specific to the topic of your essay 6. Maps out the reasons for your side in the order you will discuss them

Sample Introduction Paragraph

More than 200 million cars are produced every year throughout the world. The number of automobiles that are owned by people in America is equally staggering. Over 100 million Americans own at least one automobile, and over twenty million families in America own at least two. Despite the amount of producing and selling of cars in this modern age, only one out of every twenty Americans knows the mechanics of his or her vehicle. This has led to America’s naïve dependency on the advice of costly auto mechanics. It is time for America to realize the problem and to begin learning about correct automobile maintenance. Every American should know the basics of car maintenance in order to fix problems immediately on the road, understand when mechanics are cheating customers, and pass these skills along to younger generations.

Conclusion Paragraphs

What is a conclusion and why do I need one? The conclusion paragraph pulls all of your points together and leaves the reader with a good last impression of your essay. Therefore, it needs to be both interesting and informative. This paragraph aims to restate your thesis, summarize your main points, and connect the topic to the audience and/or world.

Three Elements of a Conclusion Paragraph

Element	Options
<p>Restates the thesis and sum up main ideas. Remind the reader of the main points of your essay in the conclusion. Important: Do not just copy and paste the thesis statement from your introduction. Use new words!</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In new words, sum up your controlling idea and main supporting points in 1-2 sentences. 2. Write one sentence for each main point in the essay. For example, one sentence for body paragraph one, one sentence for body paragraph two, etc. This only works for short essays.
<p>So what? Who cares? Explain why this topic is important and who should care about it. Remember that every topic you discuss is part of a larger conversation and you want to place your own essay within that conversation. Also, these statements connect the essay to your audience and the wider world.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Explain why the issue is important today. Why should anyone care about this topic? 2. Explain the broader implications of this issue. How will it affect the audience or world now or in the future? 3. Identify the groups of people this issue affects the most. 4. Explain how this issue might affect your particular audience.
<p>End with a memorable statement. Leave your audience with a good last impression of your essay. Often, you want to end the paper with a sentence that connects the topic to your audience in an interesting way.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Call to action urging the reader to take some action on the topic 2. Make a prediction for the future 3. Suggest a solution 4. Provocative quotation

Sample Conclusion Paragraph

The prevailing ignorance of basic auto mechanics on America's part is indeed appalling. However, in spite of the current situation, there is hope on the horizon. The number of people showing interest in car maintenance has been increasing at a steady rate over the past few years. Having grown tired and frustrated by the excessive amount of money they have had to spend on shops and auto mechanics, Americans have come to realize that car maintenance is much more essential than they had thought. If this trend continues in America, we can hopefully predict the coming of an age where dependence upon others for "car smarts" will finally become obsolete.

Sample paragraphs adjusted from "Intro, Transitional, Concluding Paragraphs." *Wheaton College Writing Center*. 2009. Web. 6 May 2015.

