

## How to Write an Excellent Introduction & Conclusion

### What does your introduction do?

- It focuses readers' attention on your subject and arouses their curiosity about what you have to say.
- It specifies what your topic is and implies your attitude.
- It should (for the purposes of EN 105) include your thesis.

### How can you write a good introduction?

1. Ask a question.
2. Relate an incident/scenario.
3. Use a vivid quotation to jump start your introduction.
4. Offer a surprising statistic.
5. State an opinion related to your thesis.
6. Provide background.
7. Set the scene by showing who, what, where, when, why.

Make sure that your intro is at least 4-5 sentences, that it contains more than your thesis statement.

Place your thesis statement at the end of the intro, so that it leads into your 1<sup>st</sup> body paragraph.

### Sample Introductions

Example 1: Can your home or office computer make you sterile? Can it strike you blind or dumb? The answer is: probably not. Nevertheless, reports of side effects relating to computer use should be examined, especially in the area of birth defects, eye complaints, and postural difficulties. Although little conclusive evidence exists to establish a causal link between computer use and problems of this sort, the circumstantial evidence can be disturbing.

---Thomas Hartmann, "How Dangerous is Your Computer?"

Example 2: The Declaration of Independence is so widely regarded as a statement of American ideals that its origins in practical politics tend to be forgotten. Thomas Jefferson's draft was intensely debated and then revised in the Continental Congress. Jefferson was disappointed in the result. However, a close reading of the historical context and the revisions themselves indicates that the Congress improved the documents for its intended purpose.

Example 3: "It is difficult to speak adequately or justly of London," wrote Henry James in 1881. "It is not a pleasant place; it is not agreeable, or cheerful, or easy, or exempt from reproach. It is only magnificent." Were he alive today, James, a connoisseur of cities, might easily say the same thing about New York or Paris or Tokyo, for the great city is one of the paradoxes of history. In countless different ways, it has almost always been an unpleasant, disagreeable, cheerless, uneasy, and reproachful place; in the end, it can only be described as magnificent. –*Time*

### **What does the conclusion do?**

- It completes the essay.
- It wraps up your discussion in a fulfilling way.
- It makes sure the reader has no lingering questions.

### **How can you write a good conclusion?**

1. Recommend a course of action.
2. Summarize the paper (not the strongest conclusion strategy, though).
3. Echo the approach of the introduction (this is called a frame, or bookend approach).
4. Give the implications, or results, of your discussion.
5. Strike a note of hope or despair.
6. Give an especially compelling example.
7. Show the deeper meaning or significance of your discussion.

Make sure you've got at least 3-4 sentences, or 2 longer ones.

## Sample Conclusions

Example 1: The Declaration of Independence has come to be a statement of this nation's political philosophy, but that was not its purpose in 1776. Jefferson's passionate expression had to bow to the goals of the Congress as a whole to forge unity among the colonies and to win the support of foreign nations.

---Ann Weiss (student), "The Editing of the Declaration of Independence"

Example 2: Until we get the answers, I think we had better keep on building power plants and growing food with the help of fertilizers and such insect-controlling chemicals as we now have. The risks are well known, thanks to the environmentalists. If they had not created a widespread public awareness of the ecological crisis, we wouldn't stand a chance. But such awareness by itself is not enough. Flaming manifestos and prophecies of doom are no longer much help, and a search for scapegoats can only make matters worse. The time for sensations and manifestos is about over. Now we need rigorous analysis, united effort and very hard work. –Peter Drucker, "How to Best Protect the Environment"

Example 3: I'll do it, too. I will have my father's body burned into ashes. I will pack these ashes into paper bags. I will go to the mountains with my mother, my sister, and the cannon. I will plunge his remains into the barrel and point it into a hill so that he doesn't take anyone with him. I will light the fuse. But I will not cover my ears. Because when I blow what used to be my dad into the earth, I want it to hurt.

----Sarah Vowell, "Shooting Dad"

The material in this handout was taken from the following source:

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