

The slide features a black background with white and yellow text. At the top, the Purdue University Global logo is on the left, and the Academic Success Center Writing Center name is on the right. The main title, 'HOW TO WRITE INTRODUCTIONS AND CONCLUSIONS', is centered in large white letters. At the bottom, the presenter's name and date are on the left, and the Purdue University Global logo and center name are on the right. A yellow vertical bar is on the left side of the slide.

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**HOW TO WRITE INTRODUCTIONS
AND CONCLUSIONS**

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How to Write Introductions and Conclusions

Tuesday, April 24, 2018, 9 pm ET

Presenter – Terry McLean,
Purdue Global Writing Center

Please click here to view this recorded webinar: <https://youtu.be/Snvc9MkdO9E>

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Recognize the characteristics of effective introductions and conclusions.
- Learn techniques for writing effective introductions and conclusions.



Learning Objectives

Recognize the characteristics of effective introductions and conclusions.

Learn techniques for writing effective introductions and conclusions.

GENERAL TIPS

- Save the introduction and conclusion for last.
- Introductions and conclusions depend on the content between them.



General Tips

Writers sometimes struggle with writing introductions and conclusions when they try to write them first. Introductions and conclusions are like bookends; they are designed to support the content between them. If you begin a draft by starting with the introduction, for example, you'll likely experience writer's block because you will not know exactly what you are trying to introduce. Most writers, including myself, find it much easier to save introductions and conclusions for last because they depend on the content between them. Another reason that it is better to write introductions and conclusions last is writing about a topic helps you think and learn about a topic. The writing process often helps you come up with good ideas for introductions and conclusions.

IMPORTANCE OF INTRODUCTIONS



- Provide relevant background information.
- Set the tone.
- Engage your readers.
- Establish purpose and focus.

Importance of Introductions

Why are introductions important? You might think of introductions being like the trailer for movies. Introductions provide relevant background information that will help acclimate your reader to the topic and set the context for what you have to say and why it matters. Introductions also set the tone (usually formal for academic writing) and engage readers by capturing their attention and prompting them to continue reading, usually through a hook or a lead-in. Finally, successful introductions establish the purpose and focus of the essay (persuading or informing), often through the use of a thesis statement which helps the reader make sense of the paragraphs that follow.

OPTIONS FOR INTRODUCTIONS

1. Establish the issue.
2. Use an attention-grabbing statement.
3. Use an extended example or a series of brief examples.
4. Define an essential term.
5. Dramatize a scene.
6. Use a quotation (direct or indirect).



Options for Introductions

There are many strategies that you can use to craft effective introductions. First, try to start out with a broad, general statement that will appeal to a wide variety of readers. For instance, if you are speaking on the topic of bullying, you may want to explore recent cases of bullying to identify any newer trends, such as cyber bullying. From this point, you can then narrow your focus down to a detailed thesis statement and keep your readers interested. Current issues tend to grab the reader's attention more quickly. You can also use an attention-getting statement, perhaps something ironic or thought provoking. For example, if you are writing about the importance of parents being good role models when they communicate with each other, you might start with a provocative statement like "Sometimes, divorce may be the best option for families." You can also use an extended example or a series of brief examples. For example, if you were writing about cyber bullying, you might provide a series of examples about children whom have committed suicide due to cyber bullying. You can also choose to define a term that is essential to understanding your paper. As an example, if you were writing about the media and the first amendment, you might begin by defining the first amendment. Dramatizing a scene is another option. Imagine you are writing about how important sleep is for college students with families. You might begin by describing a scene where a college student crams all night and then struggles with his family obligations the next day. Finally, you can use a quotation. For

example, if you were writing about the benefits of investing in space travel and exploration, you can begin with a quote from a famous astronaut. What topics are you currently working with in your assignments? Do any of these options lend themselves well to what you are writing about?

STRATEGIES TO AVOID



- Announcing – “In this paper, I will...”.
- Including specific information– Save the details and examples for the body of your paper.

Strategies to Avoid

Generally, writers should not use these strategies. First, do not announce what you plan to do or accomplish in your paper. If your writing is clear and concise, the reader will understand your purpose and plan without needing to be told that “In this paper, you will be....”. Also, avoid using specific information in your introductions. Remember that the goal of the introduction is to ease the reader into the topic and provide general background information essential to understanding the topic. Your reader will likely feel overwhelmed if you use very specific information in the introduction. Plus, your writing will be repetitive when you bring up the specific information again in the body of the paper. Here’s an example. If you are writing about capital punishment, and one of your main points in your argument is that it does not deter crime, you would not want to use any statistics showing that capital punishment does not deter crime in your introduction. Instead, you would want to save this information for a body paragraph.

INTRODUCTION CHECKLIST

- **Relate to your audience!**

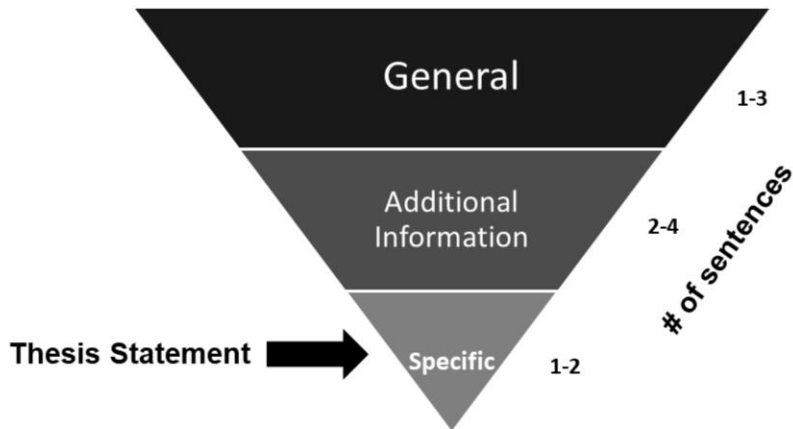


- ✓ Teaser/Hook/Lead-in
- ✓ Background Information
- ✓ Thesis Statement

Introduction Checklist

You might think of your introduction as consisting of three parts: the hook, the supplemental information or background information, and the thesis statement. We will look more closely at each of these during this presentation. Remember that the introduction is your opportunity to make a favorable first impression. If you can relate to your audience, then you will make a great first impression and win their attention.

THE FUNNEL METHOD: GENERAL TO SPECIFIC



The Funnel Method: General to Specific

One way to write a successful introduction is known as The Funnel Method.

The Funnel Method helps you move from the general to the specific. Each of the 'portions' of your introduction should be roughly be the number of sentences shown here, though, the numbers vary depending on your subject matter. Let's look at an example.

THE FUNNEL METHOD: GENERAL TO SPECIFIC

General

Establishes background information crucial to understanding paper

Engages the reader

Example - According to the Federal Highway and Transportation Agency (2008), the majority of Americans, some 57%, do not regularly wear seat belts.

The Funnel Method: General to Specific

When you are creating your lead-in or hook sentence, be creative. The general portion of the introduction typically includes a catchy sentence to grab the readers' attention and get them reading the paper. The example here is "According to the Federal Highway and Transportation Agency (2008), the majority of Americans, some 57%, do not regularly wear seat belts." In this example, the introduction presents a startling statistic: over half of Americans do not regularly wear seat belts. This statistic helps engage the reader and makes him or her want to continue reading. It also lets the readers know that this paper will likely be about the importance of wearing seat belts.

THE FUNNEL METHOD: GENERAL TO SPECIFIC



Additional
Information

Example:

Teddy Biro didn't wear one when the car he was driving skidded on an icy road and hit a utility pole; Biro was catapulted through his front windshield and died of blood loss from a severed jugular vein. The coroner reported he had no other injuries besides minor abrasions. Bob Nettleblatt wasn't wearing a seat belt when a car rear-ended him at a stop sign. Nettleblatt slammed his head into his front windshield and required 137 stitches to close up the laceration; investigators at the scene said if he had been wearing a seat belt, he would have been virtually unhurt from the two mph rear end collision.

The Funnel Method: General to Specific

Example:

Teddy Biro didn't wear one when the car he was driving skidded on an icy road and hit a utility pole; Biro was catapulted through his front windshield and died of blood loss from a severed jugular vein. The coroner reported he had no other injuries besides minor abrasions. Bob Nettleblatt wasn't wearing a seat belt when a car rear-ended him at a stop sign. Nettleblatt slammed his head into his front windshield and required 137 stitches to close up the laceration; investigators at the scene said if he had been wearing a seat belt, he would have been virtually unhurt from the two mph rear end collision.

After beginning with a very general statement (i.e. over half of Americans do not wear seat belts), writers can include additional information that helps them lead up to the thesis statement. In this continued example, the writer includes a series of examples to help lead in to the thesis statement. At this point, what do you think the writer's thesis statement (purpose and focus) might be?

THE FUNNEL METHOD: GENERAL TO SPECIFIC



Additional
Information

Example continued...

Despite what is known about the safety of wearing seatbelts, too many Americans still do not buckle up, resulting in enormous emergency medical costs and fatalities that could be avoided. Despite what some people think, wearing a seatbelt is not a choice nor does it violate one's personal rights.

The Funnel Method: General to Specific
Example continued...

Despite what is known about the safety of wearing seatbelts, too many Americans still do not buckle up, resulting in enormous emergency medical costs and fatalities that could be avoided. Despite what some people think, wearing a seatbelt is not a choice nor does it violate one's personal rights. This example introduction continues with additional information. In this case, the writer places the previous examples in context, pointing out that not wearing seat belts often results in medical costs and deaths that could otherwise be prevented. We also sense that this paper will be persuasive, as the writer continues to argue that wearing a seatbelt is not a personal choice.

THE FUNNEL METHOD: GENERAL TO SPECIFIC



Specific

Thesis Statement

Example: Wearing a seatbelt is the law, and more needs to be done to enforce the law, punish those who break it, and educate young drivers to the dangers of not buckling up.

The Funnel Method: General to Specific

When using the Funnel Method to craft an introduction, the most specific part of the introduction is usually the thesis statement. This is where the writer provides a road map for the rest of the paper and sets forth the main points that will be covered within the paper. In this example, the thesis statement is “Wearing a seatbelt is the law, and more needs to be done to enforce the law, punish those who break it, and educate young drivers to the dangers of not buckling up.”

This thesis statement tells the reader that the paper will be persuasive (Wearing a seatbelt is the law, and more needs to be done...) and the three points that the writer plans to focus on: enforcing the law, punishing those who break it, and educating young drivers about the dangers of not buckling up. If the paper is well-written, the reader can expect to see at least one body paragraph within the paper, each focused on one of these three key points.

THE IMPORTANCE OF CONCLUSIONS

- Bring the writing to a logical close.
- Reinforce the main idea in an engaging manner.
- Leave reader something to think about.

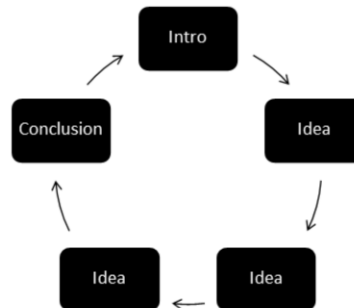


The Importance of Conclusions

Now that we've looked at the importance of introductions and dissected an example introduction, let's turn our attention to conclusions. The conclusion is an integral part of the paper because it brings the writing to a logical close and helps to reinforce the main idea of the entire paper in an engaging way. It should also leave the reader with something to think about.

OPTIONS FOR CONCLUSIONS

- The echo
- Audience appeal
- State the “so what”
- Clinching statement
- Back to the beginning



Options for Conclusions

First keep in mind, that you can always use the same techniques that we talked about for writing introductions. As an example, if you use a direct quote in your introduction, you can bring it up again in your conclusion. You can also use more than one technique in introductions and conclusions, so try different options and see what works best.

There are also additional options that tend to work well for conclusions. One option is to create an echo by repeating key words and phrases to draw readers' attention to them. For example, if you are writing about childhood obesity, you may begin several sentences with “Today's children”: Today's children are overweight. Today's children are obese. Today's children are tired. Today's children are sick. You can also appeal to the audience in a way that makes them want to do something, that puts the ball in their corner. For example, to use the topic of childhood obesity again, you might use your conclusion to make the case that, if something is not done to curb childhood obesity, then everyone will pay the costs of more expensive medical care in the future. The conclusion is also a great place to state the “so what”, or why your topic matters. Again, if you were writing about childhood obesity, then you might conclude by stating that it is the responsibility of parents, educators, and healthcare and social workers to ensure that children have healthy childhoods. You can also use a clinching statement. To use the topic of childhood obesity again, you could end your conclusion by making the bold

statement that obese children will live shorter, harder lives due to their obesity. Finally, one option that usually works well is to refer back to the beginning. For example, if you were writing about childhood obesity, and you used an extended example of an obese child in your introduction, you might bring up that child's story again.

CONCLUSION TIPS

- Restate thesis statement.
- Avoid writing clichéd phrases like “In conclusion” or “To summarize...”
- Avoid introducing new information in the conclusion.



Conclusion Tips

The conclusion is your opportunity to tie all of the ideas you have written about together. It is usually a good idea to restate your thesis statement in different words. This helps to reinforce your main ideas and remind your reader of your key points. Typically, you want to avoid writing clichéd phrases like “In conclusion” or “To summarize”. These are often not necessary especially if you have done well presenting your main points. Also, try not to include any new information in the conclusion. Bringing up new information in the conclusion will confuse the reader since the goal of the conclusion is to summarize the information that you have presented. Your reader will wonder why you did not include the information in the body of the paper.

EXAMPLE CONCLUSION

Lead-in

If Teddy Biro had been wearing a seat belt, he may still be alive.
If Bob Nettlebatt had been wearing a seat belt, he likely would have not needed 137 stitches.

Sum up main points

Wearing seat belts prevents costly medical emergencies and saves lives. Yet, too many people simply do not wear them, and this must change. Wearing a seat belt is the law, and it must be enforced. Those who violate the law must be punished, and young people need to be fully educated on the law.

Conclude

By enforcing the law, punishing those who violate it, and educating young people, society sends a strong message that will result in saving lives. That is a message that is worth sending.

Example Conclusion

Here is an example conclusion. In this example, we are using the technique of going back to the beginning, along with a bit of an echo with the repetition of the phrase beginning with “If so and so had been wearing a seat belt”. Notice also that the thesis statement is restated in this conclusion, and the reader is left to think about if this is a message worth sending.

- **Lead-in**
If Teddy Biro had been wearing a seat belt, he may still be alive. If Bob Nettlebatt had been wearing a seat belt, he likely would have not needed 137 stitches.
- **Sum up main points**
Wearing seat belts prevents costly medical emergencies and saves lives. Yet, too many people simply do not wear them, and this must change. Wearing a seat belt is the law and it must be enforced. Those who violate the law must be punished, and young people need to be fully educated on the law.
- **Conclude**
By enforcing the law, punishing those who violate it, and educating young people, society sends a strong message that will result in saving lives. That is a message that is worth sending.

PURDUE GLOBAL WRITING CENTER RESOURCES



[Writing a Good Introduction \(podcast\)](#)

[Endings \(podcast\)](#)

[Crafting Effective Introductions and Conclusions](#)

Purdue Global Writing Center Resources

Be sure to check out the Purdue Global Writing Center resources on introductions and conclusions. You can listen to the podcasts listed for more information about strategies and techniques to use in introductions and conclusions, and see examples of effective introductions and conclusions in the Crafting Effective Introduction and Conclusions tutorial. Click on each title to access the resource.

[Writing a Good Introduction \(podcast\)](#)

[Endings \(podcast\)](#)

[Crafting Effective Introductions and Conclusions](#)

THANK YOU!

HOW TO WRITE INTRODUCTIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

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April 24, 2018

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Thank you!
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