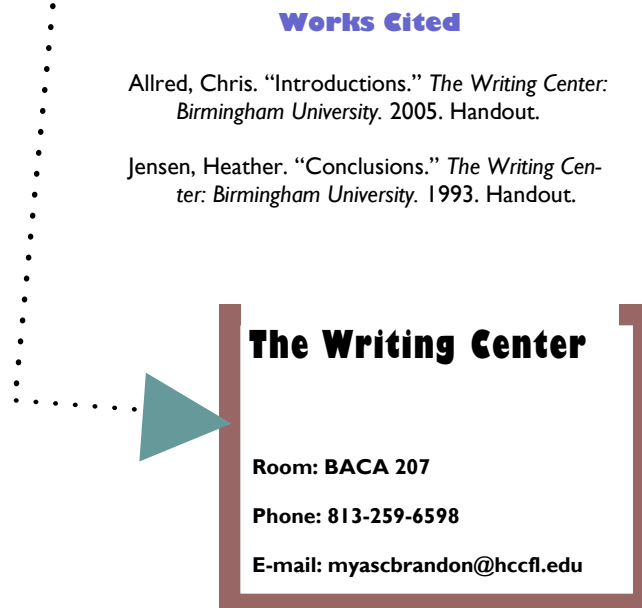


- ⇒ Does my introduction have a good opener that catches the reader's attention?
- ⇒ Does my introduction give background that leads into my thesis?
- ⇒ Did I end my intro with a strong thesis that tells exactly what I'm going to be arguing?
- ⇒ Does my conclusion recall my main ideas without just summarizing them?
- ⇒ Do I tell the reader why the issues I've talked about are important?
- ⇒ Does my conclusion make my paper feel complete?
- ⇒ Do my introduction and conclusion relate to one another?



# Introductions and Conclusions

## What is an introduction?

An introduction is the first part of your essay. It sets the reader up for what you will be discussing and helps transition them into your ideas on the topic. This makes it one of the most important elements of any paper.

The introduction's main purpose is to give your reader what they need to know in order to understand your paper.

## What is a Conclusion?

A conclusion is not just a summary of what you said in your paper. While it may be helpful to review the points you addressed, a conclusion should wrap up your entire paper.

The conclusion's main purpose is to bring your argument or point to a close and give your paper a feeling of completeness.

## Remember!

The introduction and conclusion, though they have different purposes, are related to one another. The introduction presents the main idea, and the conclusion looks back on what the paper has said about them.

**Note:** If you have a quote, fact, or statistic in your introduction, it may be a good idea to revisit that in the conclusion.

## Elements of a Good Introduction

### ⇒ A strong opening sentence

Your opening sentence sets up your topic. It should be concise and jump right into the topic or issue you'll be writing about, but should NOT be the thesis of your paper. It should be something to grab your reader's attention and get them interested in the topic.

- **Weak:** Many animals are put into animal shelters every year.
- **Better:** In the United States, over five million animals are left in shelters every year.

### ⇒ Background about the topic

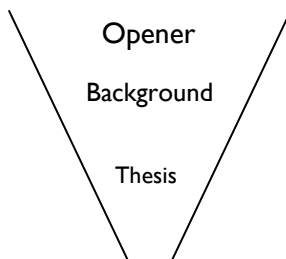
The middle of your introduction should not only establish the context for your argument, but lead the reader into it. For example, if your paper is going to argue that people should do research to pick the right pet, describing the effects of having the wrong pet may be helpful.

### ⇒ A thesis

Your thesis is the specific argument or point you're going to spend your entire paper supporting, so it must be something you can defend throughout your body paragraphs.

**Example:** People should research the kind of pet they want before deciding if it is the right pet for them.

**Note:** Think of an introduction as a funnel; you start with the broad topic and gradually narrow down to the thesis, easing the reader into the content of your paper.



## Elements of a Good Conclusion

### ⇒ A recall of your argument

Don't just copy and paste your thesis, put it a new way! Often, this is followed by a quick recap of the important points you made in your paper.

**Example:** Research can make sure that all people are matched with a pet that fits their desires and lifestyle.

### ⇒ A "so what" statement

Basically, this is what you would like people to walk away from your paper thinking about. Ask yourself why the reader should care about the topic and present that in your conclusion.

- **Weak:** Having the right kind of pet will make the pet owner's life happier and easier.
- **Better:** Research and education about the types of pets and their needs will help ensure that fewer animals end up in shelters without a home.

### ⇒ A closing statement

This is something that gives your paper a sense of completeness and is usually related to the so-what statement. It usually takes the form of:

- a call to action
- a compelling quote or question for the reader to contemplate
- a personal application (this may not be appropriate for all papers, so be sure to ask your instructor.)

**Note:** It may be helpful to think of conclusions as having a formula you can follow: **recap of argument + "so what" + closing statement = conclusion.**

## The Writing Center

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