Introductions and Conclusions

Introductions can sometimes be a lot of work. It is sometimes hard to know what should and should not be included. Hopefully these guidelines can help you make your introduction work for you instead. An introduction typically answers several questions. What is the source or subject you’re writing about? Why is it important to talk about this topic? What are some of the basic ideas that are discussed in the source material?

Thesis Statements and Their Function
A thesis is typically a one-sentence summary of an argument or claim a writer is making about the topic at hand. A thesis statement appears as the last sentence of the first paragraph. A thesis statement is not always one sentence, but it is good to try and condense it down to once sentence if possible. Please refer to the Thesis Statements handout available at the Writing Center for more details about how to create and refine thesis statements.

Questions Your Introduction Should Answer
Introductions are meant to be a general overview of your paper, culminating in a thesis statement. It should answer questions such as: What specific scholars have written about this topic? Do their claims fall into a particular category (for/against the topic, are there specific interpretations that most of them side with)? How does your claim fit within that context? Do you agree or disagree with a specific scholar? Why? These questions should help you refine your thesis.

Conclusions and Their Function
Conclusions serve to remind the reader of the specific examples brought up in the paper and to remind them how these examples relate to the thesis. An effective conclusion should mention each part of the thesis statement along with a specific example from the paper to support that point. While body paragraphs allow a writer to elaborate on a specific piece of their argument, conclusions are a “highlight reel” that reminds the reader how all those pieces come together. A conclusion gives the writer an opportunity to remind the reader about the best parts of their paper.

Contact
Want to learn more about Introductions and Conclusions? Come work with a tutor at the Writing Center! Drop by or use the information below to contact us and set up an appointment.

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