

Introductions and Conclusions

What is an introduction?

The first paragraph of your paper is most likely to be your introduction. Here, your goal is to hook or grab the audience's attention, introduce your topic, provide background information, and state your thesis.

Do I need to write my introduction first?

However, just because it is the first paragraph of your essay doesn't mean it should be the first paragraph you write. Sometimes it can be difficult to write an introduction for a paper that you haven't written yet. If you find yourself getting stuck on the introduction, perhaps write your thesis at the top of your page for reference and begin writing your body paragraphs. Once you have written your body paragraphs, you might find it easier to introduce those body paragraphs with your introduction.

What should go in my introduction?

There are many ways to start your introduction, but the goal is always to encourage your audience to keep reading. You could do one of the following:

- Start with a question that you then answer in your introduction or thesis.
- Tell a short story or highlight a personal experience that relates to your topic. Remember, you don't want it to be too long!
- Use a quote or a definition.
- State a fact or a statistic.
- Avoid using the words "in this essay I will..." in your introduction.

In the introduction paragraph, you have to provide relevant background information. This will help the audience understand the context of your topic. You should include the What, Who, Where and Why. Here are some questions to help you write the background information of your topic:

- What is it about?
- Who was involved?
- Where did it take place?
- Why did this happen?

What is a conclusion?

Your conclusion will come at the end of your paper. With this paragraph, your goal is to wrap up everything that you've said so far without leaving any loose ends, which means you want to avoid bringing up any new information or arguments at this point.

What should (and should not) go in my conclusion?

Within your conclusion, it is best to refer to (or possibly restate) your thesis and synthesize the key points you've made, explaining how they support your thesis. Other possible conclusions include the following:

- A call to action or warning of a consequence
- An answer to a question presented in the introduction
- Returning to a story or analogy used in your introduction.
- Connecting to your introduction in some other way.

Try not to use the words "in conclusion," "in closing" or "to summarize..." in your conclusion. Lastly, remember that the goal of your conclusion is to provide closure. It is not a place to include new evidence or information that supports your thesis.