

## INTRODUCTIONS:

In general, an introduction needs to do three things: 1) to spark the interest of readers; 2) to move readers gracefully toward the thesis statement; 3) to present the thesis statement of the essay.

Get the reader's attention, move toward the thesis statement, and then present the thesis statement. The thesis statement usually is most effective as just one sentence at the end of the introduction, so you should avoid presenting the thesis statement as the first sentence of the introduction and should avoid presenting the thesis statement in more than one sentence.

Transitions and development of thought must be logical. If you incorporate a quote it must fit both grammatically and logically.

## A FEW APPROACHES TO INTRODUCTION THAT SHOULD BE AVOIDED:

- 1) Avoid Summary.
- 2) Avoid Beginning with dictionary definitions obvious to readers: Example: According to Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, the word "steal" is defined as "to take the property of another wrongfully." (The writer of these sentences seems to assume that the readers are idiots, which is not a good impression to give readers. Who would not already know this definition of "steal"?)
- 3) Avoid beginning with a direct statement of what you, as the writer, are doing. Example: In this essay, identity theft will be explained. I will discuss why it is such a big problem and what the government should do about it.
- 4) Avoid mere summary in your introduction.
- 5) Avoid analysis in your introduction. Analysis is used in the body paragraphs of your essay.

## TIPS FOR A STRONGER INTRODUCTION:

- 1) Write the introduction after you have written the body of your essay. Writers often sit down to an empty computer screen and struggle to write an introduction because they do not yet know what exactly it is that they are introducing.
- 2) Avoid long introductions: Introductions generally are not long, certainly not longer than body paragraphs. The introduction is usually 1/10 of the essay. Avoid going into depth developing ideas in the introduction.

## WHAT SHOULD AN INTRODUCTION DO?

Whatever you are writing—an essay, a report, an article, a thesis, a journal, a literature review, or any other piece of academic writing—the introduction will be the first thing the reader sees. If an introduction is poorly written or constructed, if it is boring, if it does not tell readers what they need to know, if it does not help readers to orient themselves to your paper—then you have lost your readers' goodwill right from the beginning, and can be sure of losing marks, no matter how well the rest of the assignment is constructed.

It's essential, then, that you get the introduction right. This means that you must know what the introduction is supposed to do, what sorts of things must go into the introduction, how to write and structure the introduction properly, and how to interest your reader from the start.

## THE CONTENT OF AN INTRODUCTION

Always remember this: in academic writing, nothing must come as a surprise to the reader. Academic writing is not like fiction writing, where the reader can be held in suspense, not knowing who committed the crime, or whether the girl will get the boy, or whether the story will end happily or tragically.

In academic writing, the whole 'story' is outlined in the introduction, and given in detail in the body. Remember this too: in academic writing, everything must follow logically from a starting point. It is unlike fiction, where accidental happenings can change the direction of the story with unexpected twists and turns. In academic writing, there can be no twists and turns; the logical direction of the argument is indicated in the introduction, and followed faithfully in the body.

Any introduction must contain the following:

- 1) Brief, relevant background information and/or other contextualizing material;
- 2) An essay map;
- 3) A thesis statement

## BRIEF, RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Providing background information or other contextualizing material shows how your topic fits into a broader framework, and what approach you are taking. By doing this, you can point your readers in the direction you want them to go; you can also show them why the topic is significant.

'Brief' and 'relevant' are the important words. Don't give your reader too much context— give just enough to place the key issue of your assignment in its context.

A brief background of the topic is provided in the first two sentences.

**Over the past twenty five years, since Australia embraced multiculturalism as a policy, issues of intercultural communication have become more and more prominent in the workplace. However, until relatively recently, little had been written on these issues, and even now, many organizational managers have no training or knowledge of how to deal with communication problems, even though most workplaces are staffed by people of diverse cultures.**

These two sentences briefly put the focus of the assignment within its historical context, and show the reader why there is a problem. It is not necessary to give more background information in the introduction to a short essay.

## ESSAY MAP

The essay map gives the scope and direction of your paper. In one sense, the whole introduction is an essay map, since the introduction should serve as a guide to navigating the written assignment. However, it is also important to show what specific areas your writing will cover.

The example above continues:

**These particular problem areas must be addressed to ensure safety on the job. Some non-English speakers have difficulty in understanding safety instructions displaying that migrant workers have a higher incidence of accidents at the workplace. Misunderstanding can also arise due to different forms of non-verbal communication used by other cultures. The lack of knowledge about differing expectations is another problem area faced by non-English speakers.**

In this way, the introduction has provided a map to the essay, since the essay is going to cover these topics in detail.

#### THE THESIS STATEMENT

The thesis statement is one sentence (or more if the assignment is long and complex) which explicitly states the focus and direction of the writing. Refer to all the previous notes on thesis structure.

**Many of these problem areas are important but the three essential that must be addressed to secure safety in the work place are multi-linguistic directions, multi-linguistic objectives, and multi-linguistic work teams.**

#### EXAMPLE INTRODUCTION

Brief statement:

**Over the past twenty five years, since Australia embraced multiculturalism as a policy, issues of intercultural communication have become more and more prominent in the workplace. However, until relatively recently, little had been written on these issues, and even now, many organizational managers have no training or knowledge of how to deal with communication problems, even though most workplaces are staffed by people of diverse cultures.**

Essay map:

**These particular problem areas must be addressed to ensure safety on the job. Some non-English speakers have difficulty in understanding safety instructions displaying that migrant workers have a higher incidence of accidents at the workplace. Misunderstanding can also arise due to different forms of non-verbal communication used by other cultures. The lack of knowledge about differing expectations is another problem area faced by non-English speakers.**

Thesis statement:

**Many of these problem areas are important but the three essential that must be addressed to secure safety in the work place are multi-linguistic directions, multi-linguistic objectives, and multi-linguistic work teams.**

## **CONCLUSIONS:**

The conclusion should not be a summary of your entire essay or a place to add more analysis. The conclusion must make an emotional connection with the reader. Try to make a SPECIFIC connection outside of the text or film. For example, you can relate your argument to a worldly event or current issue within society. Your restating of the thesis must be a modified version not the exact words.

### **BIG MISTAKE**

Don't be philosophical. High School and college essays are not meant to solve the problems of the world. They are meant to display your communication and writing skills. This is why it is difficult to wax philosophical about steroid use, or stem cell research, or any topic forced upon you that you find you have no investment in. Most of my students feel as if they need to sum up the universe at the end of their essays when all they need to do is to sum up the essay.

Sometimes you may feel very passionate about your topic. This is a good thing. Traditionally, the only place in an essay where you can inject passion and opinion is at the conclusion. This is known as pathos. Many speeches and writings rely on pathos - an emotional appeal. Go back through your paper and underline all the places where you insert your opinion and your passion. Take those underlined segments out of the body of the paper and join them into a coherent paragraph and -voila- good ending.

Whether you are writing a problem/solution, persuasive or personal essay remember that your conclusion must answer or relate to your thesis. List main points from the body of the essay, insert your opinions and feeling, and most importantly, avoid big sweeping, philosophical endings.

### **ENDING WHERE YOU BEGAN**

We take it for granted that conclusions must finish an essay, but in truth they are usually unnecessary: everything an essay needs is satisfied by the statement of its thesis in the introduction and by the development of its points in the body. Conclusions are, for the most part, rhetorical: they provide a "finish" that creates a dramatic effect. They leave the reader feeling as though an essay is rounded off, polished, balanced and symmetrical. Why readers demand this effect is up for debate, but here are some ways to think about that polish.

### **RELEVANCE (HOW AN IDEA RELATES TO OTHERS)**

If the introduction invites readers to focus their view narrowly on a single issue or topic, then the conclusion invites them to broaden their view and take in the bigger picture again. This could mean relating your essay's topic back to the subject, or it could mean connecting it to another topic that is related by subject. The satisfaction of such a conclusion comes from feeling that a single idea is balanced against others, and that the world of ideas in the essay is balanced with the world of ideas outside of it.

### **CONCLUDING REMARKS**

While an instructor may encourage you to explore different methods of writing conclusions, other instructors may have their own course-related agendas, and they may insist that a certain formula be used in your writing. Be careful to choose a method of conclusion that follows the guidelines of an essay or

research paper assigned by your instructor. If you are unsure about which of these methods to conclude is permitted by the assignment, ask your instructor directly.

For in-class essays you may use this model for your conclusion.

Example Conclusion:

