

## Writing the Introduction

The introduction to your essay is particularly important; those first sentences need to grab the readers' interest, tell the reader what your topic is and what it will prove (your thesis statement), provide background information necessary to the audience and establishes your credibility as an expert on the topic. You will want to use an introductory device called a "lead in" to catch the readers' attention, announces your subject and sets up your thesis.

Some suggested lead-ins:

1. An arresting statistic or a shocking statement.

More people will have died from violence and terrorism in the 20<sup>th</sup> century than in the 21<sup>st</sup>.

2. A quotation

"Give me liberty, or give me death," says Patrick Henry, whose fiery rhetoric enflamed a nation and ignited a revolution.

3. An anecdote (a small story)

William H. Gates III had business on his mind from the very beginning. One day when he was ten years old, Gates drew up a \$5 contract - giving him unlimited access to his older sister's baseball mitt.

4. A description, gives the reader visual/sensory details

"With one eye blackened, one arm in a cast, and third-degree burns on both her legs, the pretty, blond two-year-old seeks corners of rooms, refuses to speak, and shakes violently at the sound of loud noises. Tammy is not the victim of a war or natural disaster; rather, she is the helpless victim of her parents, one of the thousands of children who suffer daily from America's hidden crime, child abuse." (*Steps to Writing Well, 9<sup>th</sup> edition, Jean Wyrick, Thompson, 2005*)

5. A factual statement

Texas is the poster child for capital punishment, executing 1281 inmates since the inception of capital punishment laws in 1819.

## The Introduction

*Notice the thesis statement is the last sentence of your paragraph. You can switch the order of thesis/roadmap.*

Lead-In:

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Roadmap:

Add one or two statements that build to or provide a blueprint for your thesis statement. These can provide background information on your topic, summarize what you are going to say, and briefly lay out your arguments. These statements provide a roadmap for your essay:

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Thesis Statement:

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# Body Paragraphs

Body paragraphs explain your thesis. Each of the supporting ideas (subtopics) will become a paragraph in your essay. If your outline contained three supporting ideas, you will have three body paragraphs. Start by writing down one of your ideas in sentence form. Then build your paragraph by including specific details and examples that support this idea or subtopic.

Each body paragraph focuses on one idea, reason, or example that supports your thesis. Each body paragraph needs a clear topic sentence (mini-thesis that discusses the main idea of the paragraph). Be sure to include an explanation of the specific details and examples that make your ideas clear.

## BODY PARAGRAPH ONE

Argument #1: Topic Sentence

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Evidence A: One concrete detail /evidence (quote or paraphrased example) that shows this...

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Commentary: This concrete detail/ evidence shows this because...

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Evidence B: One concrete detail /evidence (quote or paraphrased example) that shows this...

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Commentary: This concrete detail/ evidence shows this because...

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Closing Sentence: Sums up paragraph and transitions into next argument

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BODY PARAGRAPH TWO

Argument #1: Topic Sentence

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Evidence A: One concrete detail /evidence (quote or paraphrased example) that shows this...

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Commentary: This concrete detail/ evidence shows this because...

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Evidence B: One concrete detail /evidence (quote or paraphrased example) that shows this...

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Commentary: This concrete detail/ evidence shows this because...

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Closing Sentence: Sums up paragraph and transitions into next argument

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BODY PARAGRAPH THREE

Argument #1: Topic Sentence

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Evidence A: One concrete detail /evidence (quote or paraphrased example) that shows this...

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Commentary: This concrete detail/ evidence shows this because...

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Evidence B: One concrete detail /evidence (quote or paraphrased example) that shows this...

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Commentary: This concrete detail/ evidence shows this because...

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Closing Sentence: Sums up paragraph and transitions into next argument

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## Conclusions

Your conclusion wraps up your essay and restates your thesis. This is your last chance to convince the reader of your point. Use the conclusion to emphasize your thinking by pointing the reader to reflect on the significance or importance of your thesis.

Your conclusions should:

- Stress the importance of the thesis statement
- Give the essay a sense of completeness
- Leave a final impression on the reader

If you struggle with finding the right way to end your paper, here are some ideas:

1. Synthesize, don't summarize  
Don't just repeat what is already in your paper. Show how the points you made and the support and examples you used were not random, but work together.
2. State the essay's broader implications  
Examine the impact of your essay's subject in a larger context.
3. Redirect your readers  
Give your reader something to think about, perhaps a way to apply your thinking in the real world. Think globally.
4. Answer the questions "So What?"  
Show your readers why this paper was important. Help them understand why your paper was meaningful and useful

### CONCLUSION DON'TS

- Don't rewrite the thesis word for word. It is mechanical and leaves the reader flat.
- Don't introduce new points.
- Don't change your stance. Don't apologize for your thinking.
- Don't use clichés. Say it in your own words or use an appropriate quotes.
- Don't use sweeping statements -- stick to what your paper was about.

