

## Creating Introductions and Conclusions

### Some Tips for your Introduction

Introductions should contain the following three items in this order: attention getter (see below for ideas), bridge (background information on topic), and thesis.

Compare the following tactics:

1. We read so much in the paper about increasing crime. Something has to be done.

OR

2. “Man Shot in Trailer.” “Body Found Near Gas Station.” “Children Beaten and Robbed of Their Lunch Money.” “School Vandalized by Graffiti Idiots.” These sample headlines could all be found in the local paper. Something has to be done about crime in this city. Three actions every citizen can take . . .

### Various Techniques for Arousing Attention

1. Direct announcement: straight forward statement of the argument
  - The Democrats/Republicans must be defeated in the next election if America is to survive.
  - America needs more bombs.
2. Quotation or dialogue (possibly more effect from famous or well known person)
  - “You’re the man of the house,” my uncle once told me.
  - “Ask not what your country can do for you. Ask what you can do for your country.” This famous quote by John F. Kennedy exemplifies . . .
3. Anecdote: a brief story or description of a scene
  - A boy came home from school and said, “Dad! Dad! I’ve got a part in the school play. I’m going to play a man who’s been married for 25 years.” The young boy’s dad replied, “That’s a good start son. Just keep trying and one of these days you’ll get a speaking part.”
  - Gina was a beautiful, young, aspiring actress. On November 2, 2013, she came home from work only to find . . .
4. Definition: if your essay involves a general, abstract, confusing, or obscure concept
  - Discrimination is an act based on prejudice which involves favoring or differentiating between groups.
  - Homesickness is a longing to go back to some old familiar thing left behind; the longing may be so great that it manifests itself in actual physical sickness.
  - According to *Webster’s Dictionary*, hazing is “the imposition of strenuous, often humiliating, tasks as part of a program of rigorous physical training and initiation” (297).
  - Hazing is “the imposition of strenuous, often humiliating, tasks as part of a program of rigorous physical training and initiation” (“hazing” n.pag.).
5. Refutation: disagreeing with a widely held assumption or belief.
  - Many people, and many legislators, believe that the legalization of marijuana will cause a widespread increase in drug addiction and crime. Actually, as moderate legalization is beginning to show in some states, legalization probably will create a drop in crimes as marijuana ceases to be contraband and a black market product. Also, it is reported that as its use has increased, use of hard drugs and the crime associated with such drug use have decreased.
  - Many Americans count Abraham Lincoln among the great presidents. However, . . .
6. Present a new slant
  - Every fall around the first week of September a strange animal enters the forest kingdom. Its skin is multi-colored, camouflaged with green, brown, and gray colors. It carries an elongated object in its hand, and its scent is worse than Pep LaPew on a bad day.

7. Series of facts or words associated with the topic: a shotgun approach
  - Determined, courageous, motivated, smart, and kindhearted: these words all describe my grandfather and the man he once was.
8. Provide relevant background information
  - To hold its own in the struggle for existence, every species of animal must have a regular source of food, and if it happens to live on other animals, its survival may be very delicately balanced. The hunter cannot exist without the hunted; if the latter should perish from the earth, the former would too. When the hunted also prey on some of the hunters, the matter may become more complicated. In his article "The Spider and the Wasp," Alexander Petrunkevitch . . .
9. Question: begin with a question, a series of questions, or a riddle. [BE CAREFUL--this technique is often considered very informal and is best left for speeches or informal writing]
  - What was it like to be a black man in the deep South during the 1950s?
  - Should the government compensate homemakers for housework?

### **Some Tips for your Conclusion**

A conclusion should contain the following items in this order: restated thesis (major points are reviewed or restated) and clincher. The concluding paragraph is important because it has the power to draw everything together and clarify what has been said. Final impressions seem to be the most lasting. A conclusion should sum up--restate--the thesis, make a general concluding remark, make a final statement, and let the reader go gradually, not abruptly.

- Example: From this point of view, family expectations, peer group pressure, and social conditioning can all be seen to play a part in establishing sex roles. Up until quite recently, these roles have been narrowly defined: boys played with trucks, girls played with dolls; boys grew up to be doctors, girls grew up to be nurses. But now social trends are beginning to change, and sex roles are no longer so well defined. Clearly, more research is needed in order to discover how far reaching these changes actually are.

### **Various Strategies for Clincher**

1. Chronological wind up: tells what happens last
2. Illustration: illustrate your thesis with a relevant news item, personal experience, or story
3. Prediction: goes a step beyond a summary and enables the writer to make certain projections on the basis of points made
4. Reference to the Attention Getting Statement: Refer to the remarks used to introduce your topic to promote continuity and closure.
5. Shocking Facts, Statement, or Situation: Present a claim or situation that seems so unreal it shocks or startles the audience.
6. Rhetorical Question: A rhetorical question, in essence, tells the audience to "think about it."
7. Quotation: A quote can express feelings eloquently and reinforce the speaker's ideas.
8. Humor: An appropriate and genuinely funny joke or anecdote leaves them in a good mood.

9. Challenge, Appeal, or Request for Action (Persuasive ONLY): a request for audience to make some kind of effort to support topic.