

Introductions and Conclusions



Introduction

In general, the introduction consists of around 10% of the total word count. Its purpose is to introduce the topic, presenting information from general to specific thereby leading your reader towards the essay's focus. The introduction may be written after the whole structure of the essay is known, and should be revised after the body is completed to ensure it adequately introduces all main points.

A good introduction fulfils the following four requirements:

- ◇ It **engages** the reader's interest by using simple, strong sentences. A provocative, quirky or surprising first statement can be effective here.
- ◇ It **introduces** the topic (gives a bit of background if necessary, puts the topic in context, comments on the significance of the topic).
- ◇ It provides a **focus statement** or **thesis** for the essay. This can be a presentation of the **main argument** of the essay. Often, key words from the question will appear in the focus statement, but the writer's own words are always used.
- ◇ It gives the reader some understanding of the **order** in which the ideas in the essay will be developed. An introduction should explain what the rest of the essay will contain, by outlining the structure. State what will be shown/presented/explained/argued/discussed.

Conclusion

- ◇ A conclusion **should not** introduce new material. It sums up the essay's **main points**. This is done concisely, focusing only on main arguments – the conclusion should not rehash every argument made in the essay.
- ◇ It restates the essay's **main argument** or **conclusion**. Use different phrasing than you used in the introduction. Use phrases like, "This essay has demonstrated how...", "Clearly, the evidence demonstrates..." etc.
- ◇ It leaves the reader with a sense of **satisfaction** of an argument having been brought to its logical conclusion, of the question having been answered.