



## Writing Effective Introductions and Conclusions

### Introductions

An introduction should:

1. Engage your audience (compel them to read; don't just be cute).
2. Define your topic and its exigency (i.e., why it matters).
3. Provide context for your topic (give necessary background).
4. Indicate your methodology and/or offer a road map for your paper.
5. Offer your thesis.

Ways to perform these functions (Rosenwasser and Stephen call these "opening gambits")

1. Challenge an existing prevailing view (one you seek to change).
2. Define a key term (though avoid standard dictionary definitions).
3. Provide a working thesis.
4. Discuss briefly your second best example (perhaps one you don't have space to analyze more fully in the body of your paper).
5. Tell a story (make sure it is directly relevant to your topic).

### Conclusions

A conclusion should:

1. Judge. Explicitly provide your stance.
2. Culminate. Offer a more complete and refined version of your thesis. Don't just repeat what you wrote in the introduction.
3. Send off. Give your readers something to think about. Predict the future. Share your hopes.

Ways to perform these functions

1. Address larger implications. Answer the so what question.
2. Bring closure. Return to an idea from your introduction and re-interpret it in light of the work you have done in the body of your paper.
3. Acknowledge limitations. Qualify your thesis. (But don't end on a concession!)

Work cited

Rosenwasser, David, and Jill Stephen. *Writing Analytically*. 4<sup>th</sup> ed. Boston: Thomson, 2006. 220-221, 226-229, 232-233.