

## **Guide to Introductions, Conclusions, Topic Sentences, and Concluding Sentences**

Introductions, topic sentences, concluding sentences, and conclusions provide linking material around the body of your essay and guide readers to understand your meaning.

NOTE: It's helpful to be fairly certain about the body of your paper before you finalize these elements. You may want to write tentative ideas for these in the first draft of your essay and then revise them after you finalize the rest of your essay.

**Introduction:** The introduction should introduce your reader to your topic and the main point of your essay.

1. The first sentence or two should provide a general – but interesting – introduction to the topic, providing context for the essay.
2. The middle of the introduction may outline the logic that leads to your thesis, or state the main points of evidence for your thesis that you will address in the body paragraphs of your essay.
3. At the end of your introductory paragraph, state your thesis as clearly and specifically as possible. Try to fit in into one sentence, but use two if you need to!

**Topic Sentences:** At the beginning of each paragraph, include a sentence that:

1. Tells the reader what the paragraph will be about, and
2. Sums up the importance of the paragraph.
3. Topic sentences can also serve as transitions that link the main idea of the previous paragraph to the main idea of this paragraph.

For example: “While social concerns were critical to Scottsville’s development [TRANSITION], the economic concerns of equality and resources also added to the town’s failure to thrive [IMPORTANCE OF PARAGRAPH] as people became frustrated about the unfair distribution of wealth and began to form rivalries [WHAT PARAGRAPH ABOUT].”

**Concluding Sentences:** At the end of each paragraph, include a sentence that sums up the paragraph and links the paragraph’s main point to your thesis, commenting on its larger significance.

For example: “These rivalries were a significant factor in Scottsville’s decline [SUMMARY OF PARAGRAPH], demonstrating how the town’s lack of long-term community planning led to an unsustainable, unequal social structure that eroded the town’s communal function [LINK TO THESIS].”

**Conclusion:** Your conclusion should wrap up your paper by returning to your thesis and discussing its broader significance. You might ask yourself:

1. Why does this matter?
2. What are some broader ideas/issues that my paper relates to?
3. What do I want to leave the reader with?

4. Are there any questions left to ponder?