

Introductions and Conclusions

Introduction – opening your essay in an effective manner is crucial!

- Focuses reader's attention on your subject; arouses curiosity
- Specifies what your topic is; implies your attitude
- Provides your thesis statement

Most common structure of introduction – “funnel introduction”

- Statement or question about the subject; something the reader can relate to
 - o One or more sentences that clarify or narrow the subject
 - Thesis statement

What to avoid

- A vague generality or truth (“Throughout human history...,” “In today's world...”)
- A flat announcement (“The purpose of this essay is...,” “In this essay I will...”)
- Reference to the essay title
- An apology (“While I am not an expert...”)

Common essay openings

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ask a question - Relate an incident - Use a vivid quotation - Offer a surprising statistic or other fact - Provide background | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Make historical comparison or contrast - Outline a problem - In Computer Science – summarize your paper |
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Conclusion – should provide a clear resolution to your paper (= what should the reader remember)

What to avoid

- A repetition of the introduction
- A new direction
- A sweeping generalization

Common ways of closing essays

- Recommend a course of action
- Provide a summary of the paper
- Restate the thesis, reflect on its implication
- Give an example representing your argument

Exercise:

Read extracts 1 and 2 from the introductions to two different students essays related to consumption. For each extract, decide on the purpose of the essay, A or B.

1. Consumers behave very differently from a generational perspective. In particular, older consumers differ greatly from the younger generations, who are less loyal to particular brands and more suspicious of advertising messages.

- A. To argue that the older generation are the most important consumers
- B. To show the similarities and differences in consumer behavior

2. If the whole world consumed at the same rate as the USA, four planets would be needed to maintain the world's current population. People need to evaluate their current consumption patterns if the world is to have a sustainable future.

- A. To compare American consumption patterns with others in the world
- B. To look at the problem of consumption rates and the need for change

Compare and contrast

- Compare – to show **similarities** between the chosen objects
- Contrast – to show **differences** between the chosen objects
- Transitional words are important!
- Two basic ways of organizing:

A) the block method

B) the point-by-point method

Exercise: write the following using either the block method or the point-by-point method

Topic sentence: Newest poll finds that book sales in general are increasing due to e-books and audio books; the sales of printed books have decreased by 8% since 2008, yet printed books are still popular according to the latest poll.

Sentences:

- Around 65% of readers like the feeling of a real book.

Adapted from Fowler, Henry Ramsey; Aaron, Jane E., and Janice Okoomian. *The Little, Brown Handbook*. 10th ed. New York: Longman. 2007.

- E-readers are easier to carry around than printed books.
- E-readers often have a built-in dictionary that provides quick reference when needed.
- The physical aspect of a book is good for writing down notes.
- Shopping in bookstores rather than browsing online is for many a positive experience.
- E-readers can hold hundreds of books.
- Books can be resold, collected or given as a gift.
- Shopping online for e-book can be done from the convenience of your home.