

EN11 - Introductions and Conclusions

You have been taught all sorts of ways to begin and end essays, but somehow most students don't retain this knowledge. Hopefully, this handout will be a good resource for you.

Introductions

- Do not start with a (rhetorical) question or a dictionary definition of a word → these are the most clichéd ways to start essays and are big risks to take with teachers who have read thousands of essays
- You are totally free to begin with a clause or a brief sentence that sets the context of your essay
- Always, always, always introduce the author and title of work near the beginning of the introductory paragraph
 - *Italicise* → magazines, books, newspapers, academic journals, films, television shows, long poems, plays, operas, musical albums, works of art, websites
 - Underline only if you are handwriting these titles
 - "Quotes" → short stories, poems, song titles, TV episode titles

→→→ Thesis statement → answers the question or the purpose for why you're writing this essay

- Cannot be too general → your essay won't have purpose
 - Author demonstrates the use of imagery. → for what purpose?
 - Author shows how people encounter loss. → how?
 - Author argues the importance of resilience. → what is important about it?
 - Author shows the relationship between parent and child. → which is what?
- Cannot be too specific → your essay will be way too short
 - Author demonstrates the use of sight imagery in the first two minutes of episode 420 to emphasise how Milhouse and Lisa can only ever exist as a couple in alternate timelines. → How long and effective of an essay do you think you can actually write?
- Like Goldilocks, look for a thesis statement that's just right
 - Author emphasises the importance of relying on one's own ability to achieve success.
 - This is great. It uses functional words and shows the reader that the idea of self-reliance leads to personal success.

Some key words for your introduction:

- Functional words: demonstrates, shows, illustrates, emphasises, argues*, shows, exemplifies
- importance
- idea, notion, understanding, belief, concept
- how, the way(s) in which

Conclusions

Without a doubt, conclusions are the worst and sometimes most painful parts of writing an essay: how do you restate your thesis without repeating it, and how do you end your essay without leaving your reader dissatisfied?

Some tips:

- refer back to the work as a whole and the value that it has on readers:
 - Author's *Work* has been studied for many years by students all over the world because of its [useful/timeless/etc quality]. Character(s) is/are effective representatives of how [humans interact]. [restate your thesis but DO NOT do it word-for-word].
- You can do **food-for-thought endings**, meaning that you leave your reader with one sentence that is a thoughtful reflection of your essay as a whole.
 - Perhaps through studying [character], readers will also learn [A+ quality of this character].
- DO NOT use
 - In conclusion → so ineffective
 - To sum up
 - Finally
 - To end this essay
 - Lastly
 - All in all
 - To conclude
 - Overall
 - quotations in your conclusion