

# Introductions and Conclusions

## Introductions

### Why do I need an introduction?

Introductions are important for making people want to keep reading your paper and introducing your topic to your reader. The two main parts of an introduction are typically called an *attention getter* and a *thesis statement*.

### What is an attention getter?

Attention getters can be intimidating to many writers, since they are unsure of good ways to make others want to read their papers. However, there are some strategies you can use when writing an attention getter in your introduction. You could try beginning your paper with one of the following:

#### Quotation

A quotation is something that was said or written by someone else.

**Example:** “Quitting smoking is the easiest thing in the world. I know because I’ve done it a thousand times” (Mark Twain).

#### Concession

A concession can be a useful way to address the opposing viewpoint and present your viewpoint.

**Example:** Some say that smoking bans infringe on individual rights; however, those who oppose smoking bans neglect to consider those who are unwillingly exposed to second-hand smoke.

#### Short narrative

Narratives, or stories, help readers see your point of view by helping them relate to your idea through the story.

**Example:** Tell a story of someone you know or a well-known person who was negatively affected by smoking.

#### Interesting fact or statistic

Many readers respond favorably to facts and statistics since they think numbers cannot be argued; however, statistics can sometimes be misleading, so be sure to use accurate statistics and explain the statistic in enough detail so your readers will not question the statistic’s validity.

**Example:** According to the Centers for Disease Control, second hand smoke causes over 40,000 deaths per year in the United States.

#### Question that will be answered throughout the paper

Questions can be effective rhetorical devices in academic papers, but be sure to use them sparingly. Too many questions in a paper will allow your readers to answer the questions on their own without you explaining your main point.

**Example:** Do smoking bans threaten individual rights?

### Relevant background material

Many topics require some background description before a reader will understand what you are writing about.

**Example:** Briefly discuss the history of smoking bans in the United States.

### Analogy

An analogy is “a comparison of two things based on their being alike in some way” (“Analogy”). Analogies can simplify an idea so your readers understand your main point more clearly.

**Example:** Imagine a world in which people were allowed to bring pet tigers or bears to public places; those who felt threatened by tigers or bears would be forced to stay in their homes. Similarly, public locations that allow smoking keep non-smokers from visiting those locations because of second-hand smoke exposure.

### Definition that is important in your paper

Defining a term or idea can help your readers better understand your main idea.

**Example:** Second-hand smoke is smoke that is “inhaled involuntarily from tobacco being smoked by others.”

### What is a thesis statement?

A thesis statement is a sentence, usually located at the end of your introduction, which states the main point of your essay. If you do not have a clear thesis statement, your reader might not be able to follow your ideas throughout the rest of your paper.

A thesis statement should be the following:

- A claim, not a statement of a fact or an observation
- Focused on one main point
- Clear, not vague
- Narrow and specific, not broad and general. (Write Place)

## Conclusions

### Why do I need a conclusion?

Conclusions allow you to revisit your main point or thesis statement and leave a final impression on the reader. Without a conclusion, your reader might not feel that your paper had a clear point or a definitive ending. A conclusion includes a *restatement of your thesis statement* and a *final impression for your reader*.

### How do I restate the thesis statement?

A simple way to revisit your main point is to restate your thesis statement at the beginning of your conclusion. Typically, the thesis restatement is the first sentence of the conclusion. Do not use exactly the same thesis statement that you used in your introduction in your conclusion. Instead, reword the thesis statement so it sound different, but makes the same main point.

## How do I leave a final impression with my reader?

After restating your thesis, you can try one of the following methods to leave a final impression on your reader.

Echo the introduction to bring your reader full circle

**Example:** If you used an analogy in the introduction (like comparing smoking in public places to allowing tigers and bears to roam in public places), you could bring that analogy back in your conclusion.

Challenge the reader to apply the ideas from your paper to her or his own life

**Example:** Challenge the reader to consider a life in which he or she could not go to a restaurant without feeling short of breath.

Look toward the future by leaving the reader with an idea or example of how your ideas can affect her or him or society in general

**Example:** Consider a world where everyone feels comfortable in public places, not just smokers.

Ask questions to help your reader gain a new perspective on your topic

**Example:** You could ask your readers a question like this: Should smoking be considered a right when non-smokers right to be healthy is infringed upon because of smokers' decisions?

Clearly answer the "so what" question.

The "so what?" question is important to consider in every paper you write whether or not you use this method in your conclusion. You should always ask yourself "so what?" when you are writing your thesis statements and using quotations in your papers. Why is what you are writing important?

**Example:** You can use this "so what?" question to conclude your paper by explaining to your readers why your paper is important. In the smoking ban example, you could write about the importance of the personal freedom to be healthy.

## Works Cited

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