Introductory Paragraph

“FUNNEL IN”

The introductory paragraph is often called a “funnel” paragraph. In this technique, the introduction works like a funnel, with a wide opening at the top representing the most general statements, then narrowing until the thesis is reached at the bottom. The principle is to start with a broad topic and narrow down the topic, sentence-by-sentence, until the end of the introductory paragraph. The paragraph should end with the thesis statement. By starting with a broad topic sentence, the writer begins with what the reader should already know and moves toward what the reader perhaps doesn’t know, but should know after reading the paper.

Format

A. The first sentence(s) should grab the attention of the reader. This is called a “hook.”

B. Following the first sentence(s), introduces the work of literature you will be analyzing. This sentence must contain the author’s full name and the title of the work of literature. When you refer to the author later in your paper, use only his or her last name. A brief description of the work of literature, the author’s purpose in writing the book or some of your main point should follow. Save the detailed analysis for body paragraphs.

C. The introductory paragraph must conclude with the thesis statement. This statement is your controlling purpose in writing the essay.

Example (from an Of Mice or Men essay):

During the Great Depression of the 1930’s, thousands of Americans lost their jobs and their homes when farms and businesses failed and unemployment and poverty exploded. As a result, many men were set adrift to wander and to seek work in strange places. In his novel, Of Mice and Men, set in the 1930’s, John Steinbeck portrays several of these lonely, drifting characters who are struggling under the difficult times of the Great Depression. The novel illustrates the emotions, hopes, and disappointments of these characters. In Of Mice and Men, Steinbeck shows the American Dream to be nothing more than a myth that is impossible to achieve.
Concluding Paragraph

“FUNNEL OUT”

This paragraph is sometimes referred to as a “reverse funnel” approach. The conclusion has a construction opposite that of your introductory paragraph, where you start out with general, broad statements and narrow down to a thesis statement. In the “reverse funnel” you start with a narrow focus (a restatement of or reference to your thesis). Note: Do not repeat your thesis word-for-word. Paraphrase it or reference your main idea.

For many people, the conclusion is the most difficult paragraph to write because everything you wanted to say has been stated in the body of the essay. What's left? The conclusion takes the reader from the individual points you made in the body of the essay and puts the whole paper into perspective, tying it up, so to speak. The function of the conclusion is to make sense of the paper.

Format

A. The opening sentence(s) of your concluding paragraph could be a brief restatement or paraphrase of the thesis of the paper. By referring to your thesis you remind your reader of what you set out to discuss or prove in your thesis.

   Caution: Do not start this paragraph with a statement such as “In conclusion…” Be more creative in calling your reader’s attention to the fact that your essay is nearing its wrap-up.

   Examples of first phrases: “It is apparent throughout…that” “In the final analysis of…it is apparent” “As a result…” “Due to…” “Consequently…” “Throughout…”

B. Then summarize your supporting points, with reference to the author and book title.

C. Write a strong concluding statement. This sentence should be a statement of your conclusions or message. Some people call the concluding statement the “take home message”…the facts or truths that you want your reader to remember. The concluding statement could be thought-provoking, giving your reader a kernel of truth or reality on which they can reflect.

Example (from an *Of Mice and Men* essay):

Perhaps most important of all, having seen the difficulty of achieving the American Dream, many people no longer even try. John Steinbeck has skillfully used the characters and incidents in *Of Mice and Men* to paint a picture of economic disadvantage, prejudice, and the struggle to succeed. Hopefully, someday people like George, Lennie, Candy, and Curley’s wife will be able to achieve their dreams. Their experiences now, however, still seem universal. The dreams of the average American are all too often unattainable.

Thanks to: http://www.lz95.net/lzhs/wcenter/Introduction%20and%20%20%20conclusion.pdf