
What the introduction may do

- Give an overview of what the piece will be about.
- Present the central idea of the assignment.
- Give reasons for writing this piece.
- Explain how the title will be interpreted.
- Give reasons for answering a question in a particular way.
- Introduce the questions the essay will be addressing.
- Give the background to the main topic of the essay; the history and/or the context.
- Make a bold statement that the rest of the essay will fill out and justify.
- Quote from somewhere else in order to interest the reader and give a feel for what the whole essay is about.
- Present a concrete example or story which the piece will explain or elaborate upon.
- Relate the assignments to other work in the same field.
- Convey the writer's own relationship both to the material of the assignment and to the reader, and a sense of her own voice in the assignment.

What the conclusion may do

- Summarize the 'answers' to the questions the assignment set out to address, signalled in the introduction.
 - Refer back to the question posed in the title and show that it has been answered.
 - Give a sense of 'the ending'.
 - Point out what the assignment has and has not answered.
 - Show that the writer has done what she proposed to do.

 - Put forward the writer's point of view in the light of the evidence she has presented.
 - Allow the writer to be positive about the ideas in the assignment.
 - Point the reader forward to a new related idea.
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Developing an argument

- The writing shows a sense of purpose, as though the writer knows where she is going and is leading the reader there step by step.
- There is a definite central idea with reasons for it and evidence to back it up and support it.
- The writing may 'present a case' for a particular viewpoint.
- The writing is constructed in a particular way – for example, it builds up a case with one idea logically leading to the next.
- The ideas are put together in a way that is clear to the reader.

Argument as 'story'

- The writer and the reader know clearly what this piece of writing is about.
- Selected ideas or events are linked together in a particular sequence.
- The reader is given a sense of direction as she reads.
- There is a clear beginning and end.
- There is a sense of 'completion' to the whole piece, of it being 'rounded off'.
- There are some basic patterns and conventions that the writer tries to follow and the reader expects.

Notes

- Remember that different writers plan and organize their writing at different stages of the writing process, and try to discover how you work.
- Make a plan if you can but expect to alter it as you write. Always treat your first outline plan as provisional.
- Try to identify how your writing requires a particular structure. To do this, think about what work any part of your writing is doing.
- Above all, determine what your central idea is and make sure that your assignment is organized around this.
- Experiment with mind maps to help you build up the topics and themes for your argument.
- With the computer you can always move things about early on in the planning stage to get an overall feel for how the different parts of your assignment might fit together.

NOTES

- ☐ Notice if you are repeating yourself, but bear in mind that repetition is sometimes necessary in order to remind the reader of something you have said before.
- ☐ Consider writing the introduction after you have completed the rest of the essay.
- ☐ Don't be afraid to cut when you are reviewing your work. You can keep these cuts to use later.
- ☐ Think carefully about the particular work your introduction and conclusion are doing.
- ☐ Ask someone else to read your work at the editing stage.
- ☐ Try to leave at least 24 hours between completing and reviewing your assignment.

Editing your work as an 'outsider'

- Does the piece of work have a central idea? Is this idea apparent for the reader or do you have to 'search' for it? Is it clear enough for you to restate in a different way?
 - Does the piece of work raise any questions that it does not answer?
 - Is there a sense of an 'argument' developing?
 - Do points – both within and beyond paragraphs – seem to follow logically? Does the whole piece hang together?
 - Why is a particular bit of information in the piece? What work is it doing for expressing the ideas of the assignment? (For example, is there too much 'chronology writing' at the expense of analysis?)
 - Can you understand what is written? If not, can you see why? Does the use of subject terminology seem clear and confident?
 - Does the introduction seem helpful as a signpost to the whole piece?
 - Is there a sense of a satisfying 'ending'?
 - Does the ending in particular, as well as the piece as a whole, answer the question that has been set? How do you know? Has the writer referred to the question clearly and explicitly?
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Magazine article with 2
authors on more
than 1 page

Newspaper article
on 1 page

Newspaper article on
more than 1 page

Book with 2 authors

Book with 1 author

Encyclopedia article with
author named

Encyclopedia article on
CD-ROM with no
author named

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Review

These are the important points you should have learned from this chapter:

1. In academic writing, you are expected to use information from outside sources to support your ideas. When you include in an academic paper information from a book, newspaper, magazine, encyclopedia, dictionary, or nonprint sources such as television programs, CD-ROMs, or the Internet, use any of the following methods:
 - Direct quotations: Repeat the author's or speaker's exact words, and place them within quotation marks.
 - Indirect quotations: Report the author's words, making changes in pronouns and verb tenses as necessary. Do not use quotation marks.
 - Paraphrase: Rewrite the author's meaning in your own words. Include all, or almost all, of the ideas that are in the original. Change the sentence structure and substitute synonyms where possible to avoid plagiarizing.
 - Summary: Condense a writer's words and summarize the main ideas in as few of your own words as possible.
2. Document your sources to avoid plagiarizing and to help your reader find the sources of your information.
 - Use in-text citations.
 - Prepare an alphabetical list of works cited.

Part I Writing a Paragraph

PEER EDITING CHECKLIST

PEER EDITOR'S COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS	
GENERAL	
1. What do you like best about this paragraph?	
PAPER FORMAT	
2. Is the format correct? Does it look like the model on page 19?	
ORGANIZATION AND CONTENT	
3. Topic sentence: Is there a clear topic sentence? Does it have a controlling idea?	
4. Supporting sentences: Are the quotations incorporated smoothly into the paragraph? Did the writer follow the rules for using direct and indirect quotations? Are there enough supporting details?	
5. Coherence: Do the ideas and sentences flow smoothly? Are transition signals used where they are needed?	
SENTENCE STRUCTURE	
6. Are there any unclear sentences? Can you suggest a way to improve them?	
GRAMMAR AND MECHANICS	
7. Are there any errors in grammar and mechanics?	

