

From the Simon and Schuster Handbook for Writers
Lynn Troika 74-75

Introductory Paragraphs (22):

Strategies to use:

- Providing relevant background information
- Relating briefly an interesting story or anecdote
- Giving one or more pertinent—perhaps surprising—statistics
- Asking one or more provocative questions
- Using an appropriate quotation
- Defining a key term
- Presenting one or more brief examples
- Drawing an analogy

Strategies to avoid:

- Don't write statements about your purpose, such as "I am going to discuss the causes of falling oil prices."
- Don't apologize, as in "I am not sure this is right, but this is my opinion."
- Don't use overworked expressions, such as "Haste makes waste, as I recently discovered."

Concluding Paragraphs (30)

Strategies to try:

- A strategy adapted from those used for introductory paragraphs—but be careful to choose a different strategy for your introduction and conclusion:
 1. Relating a brief concluding interesting story or anecdote
 2. Giving one or more pertinent—perhaps surprising—concluding statistics
 3. Asking one or more provocative questions for further thought
 4. Using an appropriate quotation to sum up the thesis statement
 5. Redefining a key term for emphasis.
- An analogy that summarizes the thesis statement
- A summary of the main points, but only if the piece of writing is longer than three to four pages.
- A statement that urges awareness by the reader.
- A statement that looks ahead to the future.
- A call to readers.

Strategies to avoid:

- Introducing new ideas or facts that belong in the body of the essay
- Rewording your introduction
- Announcing what you've discussed, as in "In this paper, I have explained why oil prices have dropped."
- Making absolute claims, as in "I have proved . . .)
- Apologizing, as in "Even though I am not an expert . . .)