

EFFECTIVE INTRODUCTIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Begin or end your paper with a relevant example:

George, 43, is a mentally retarded man. Every day, he takes the bus to his job in a hospital laundry. At night, he attends classes in money management. On weekends, he may visit the zoo or go to a movie with his girlfriend. George, like many other mentally handicapped people, is living proof that the disabled, contrary to popular opinion, are capable of improving their lives financially, educationally, and socially.

Begin or end your paper with a story that ties into the thesis of the paper:

Jerry Dobson was headed home on January 3, 2006, eager to celebrate his third wedding anniversary with his wife and baby son. When a car ahead of him did not move after the light turned to green, Jerry lightly honked his horn to alert the driver. The driver, however, became infuriated, drew a gun, and shot Jerry twice, killing him instantly. How many more incidents like this have to happen before we accept road rage as the serious public health problem it is?

Begin or end your paper with a contradiction (especially effective if it rejects conventional wisdom):

Everyone loves fairy tales. We love to read them to our children, and we have fond memories of our own parents reading them to us. Superficially, most fairy tales seem harmless and comforting. However, when we look below the surface, we may find that fairy tales encourage such evils as sexism, racism, and violence.

Use a striking detail, statistic, or quotation in your introduction or conclusion:

Every day you handle a deadly weapon. It carries as much destructive force as two sticks of dynamite ignited together, and every year it profoundly impacts hundreds of thousands of lives. The weapon is your car, which can become lethal in the hands of a drunk driver. Consequently, we need to increase drastically the penalties we impose on those who drive while intoxicated.

Use a rhetorical question in your introduction or conclusion:

Even as we speak, our national debt rises astronomically. We have mortgaged our future to pay for overindulgence in the present. Spoiling and pampering ourselves, both as individuals and as a nation, we refuse to recognize the inevitable: that some day we must pay for what we have. It is imperative that Congress enact a balanced budget amendment to bring our spending under control. Inevitably, this will require economic belt tightening, which no one looks forward to. Yet is it just and moral that we saddle our children and grandchildren with the bill for our excesses?

End with a call to action:

And so our society continues to ignore the plight of the homeless, trying to pretend they don't exist. Is there anything we can do to write society's wrongs? Write your congressmen and ask they pass legislation to help the homeless. Volunteer for a homeless shelter. Organize a drive for food or toiletries to be distributed to the poorest of the poor. Enlighten your friends and neighbors: point out to them that not all of the homeless are lazy alcoholics. If we continue to do our part, we may start to see improvement in the condition of those with no shelter, no food, and no hope.