Introduction and conclusion paragraphs are crucial to strong papers. Many students struggle with the opening and closing paragraphs of their essays. One of the easiest and most effective ways to structure these paragraphs is to write introductions from the general to the specific and to write conclusions from the specific to the general.

**Introductions**

Introduction paragraphs exist to introduce your reader to your topic and your thesis. Thesis statements tend to be very specific, so often some introduction to the topic is needed in order to show your reader why they should care. Therefore, it is often effective to structure your introduction paragraph like this:

- Begin with a general statement of the problem or question your thesis and paper will address. For an essay whose thesis is that school lunches cause childhood obesity, the general statement might be something like “Obesity is a growing problem among American children.”
- Spend a few sentences giving information that puts this statement into greater context. In the example above, you might discuss the personal and societal consequences of childhood obesity and present some statistics on the problem.
- Finish the paragraph with your thesis statement.

**Conclusions**

Conclusion paragraphs exist to remind your reader of your overall argument, how you’ve supported your argument, and why your argument matters. Essentially, you’re hammering your point home one last time. Because you already have all the information you need, conclusion paragraphs are simple to write. Structure them like this:

- Begin by restating your thesis in different words. If my original thesis was “School lunches cause childhood obesity,” I might reword it to something like “Childhood obesity can be reduced by adjusting the school lunch program.”
- Spend a few sentences summarizing the main support you’ve presented for your argument. You can often do this simply by rewording the topic sentences of your body paragraphs.
- End with a concluding sentence that reminds the reader of why your subject matters.
**Writing Your Introduction**

Are you ready to write the introduction for your paper? If so, follow the steps below.

1. What is the overall problem or question your paper addresses? This will be your opening sentence.
2. What information does your reader need to know in order to understand the question or problem? Spend several sentences giving necessary background information.
3. What is your thesis statement? This will be the last sentence of your introduction paragraph.

Congratulations! Now you have a rough introduction paragraph.

**Writing Your Conclusion**

When you’ve written the rest of your paper and are ready to write your conclusion, follow the steps below.

1. Write your thesis statement in different words than you used in your introduction paragraph.
2. Summarize your main points. Often, you can simply reword your body paragraph topic sentences.
3. Why does your thesis matter, or what can people do to help solve the problem you’ve presented? Your answer to these questions will be your closing sentence.

And now you’re done!

Writing strong introduction and conclusion paragraphs takes practice. They may seem difficult at first, but they do get easier with time. In the meantime, if you’re unsure about your writing, feel free to bring it to the English Center for review with a tutor.