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Academic Writing

*from paragraph to essay*



# ***Introductions and Conclusions***

**The purpose of an introduction.**

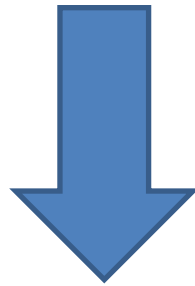
The introduction and the conclusion work together to make the topic and main ideas of the essay clear to the reader.

## **What is an introduction?**

- It is the first paragraph of an essay.
- It is usually five to ten sentences.
- It catches the reader's interest.
- It gives the general topic of the essay.
- It gives background information about the topic.
- It states the main point (the thesis statement) of the essay.

# Organisation of the Introduction

General Ideas



Specific Idea  
(Thesis Statement)

**I-Read the introduction to the essay in Unit 8, exercise 1 on page 57. Complete this diagram.**

**General ideas:**

*Most Americans would probably say that their language comes from England.*

English has been influenced by other countries and groups.

Some words are borrowed from other languages.

African Americans have contributed and changed words.

# How to write a strong introduction

- *Introduce the topic clearly.*
  - *Give **several** sentences of information about the topic*
  - *State the thesis (main idea) of the essay*
- 

An introduction is weak if:

- 1– it does not give enough information about the topic.
- 2– It gives too much information about the topic.
- 3– It talks about too many topics.
- 4– It does not state a clear thesis.

## 2- Strong or weak?

A- Family structure has changed a lot in the last fifty years in Asia. The decrease in the number of extended families has caused several social changes.

Weak Introduction → (Too short. The writer could add one or two more sentences with information about changes in families. Also, there is no interesting information to draw the reader in. Some statistics or examples could be added at the beginning.)

B- The number of businesses using the Internet for selling products has increased greatly in recent years. Shoppers, too, are using the Internet in greater numbers to buy all types of products, such as books, cameras, and clothing. Although e-business has become popular, there are certain risks involved in **Internet shopping** that are a concern for both businesses and consumers.

Strong Introduction

C- ***Stargazing** – looking at the stars – is something everyone should try. I love it. When looking at the night sky, most people observe that the moon, **planets**, and stars move from the **east** side of the **sky** to the west over a period of several **hours**. In fact, this movement is actually the movement of the Earth rotating on its axis. In addition, as the Earth revolves around the sun throughout the year, different stars are visible at different times.*

- **Weak Introduction** (The introduction doesn't have a thesis statement. A possible thesis statement:

***Stargazing is a valuable way to learn about our world as well as outer space.*** If a different thesis statement is chosen, some of the details in the introduction may be too specific or not relevant.)



The **origins** of Irish music can be **traced** back nearly 2,000 years to the time when the Celts arrived in Ireland. Music thrived under the rule of the Chieftans, but later declined during the British colonisation of Ireland. However, during the **Great Famine** of the 1840s, thousands of Irish people emigrated to North America in search of a better life, taking their music with them. Irish music soon **became** established in American cities with a high **proportion** of Irish immigrants, such as Chicago and Boston. However, Irish music really became known to a wider audience in the 1970s, when musicians experimented with more modern arrangements of traditional songs and fusion with rock, world music and jazz. **Now, in the twenty-first century, Irish music is more popular and successful than ever.**

- **Weak Introduction:** (Too long, with some information that is not relevant. The writer should delete *These cities are popular tourist destinations with many interesting sights and Jazz originated in the American South in the early twentieth century.*)

*E- Adjusting to another culture's food can be a challenge for many travelers. The geography of a country can greatly affect the typical foods that are eaten by its people.*

**Weak Introduction** :(Too short; also, the sentences are not related closely enough. One of the ideas needs to be chosen and developed into an introductory paragraph ).

## *Types of information*

-How to make an introduction interesting:

To make an introductory paragraph interesting

for the reader, you can include :

- **interesting facts or statistics.**
- **a personal story or example.**
- **an interesting quotation.**

**3** Read the three introductions in Unit 8, exercise 3 on page 58 again. What types of information does each introductory paragraph contain?

**A- Personal information**

**B- Facts**

**C-Facts, an interesting quotation**

# *The Conclusion*

- It is the last paragraph of the essay.
- It summarises the main points of the essay.
- Or Restates the T.S. ( using different words)
- It makes a final comment about the essay's main idea.
- It may emphasise an action that you would like the reader to take.
- IT DOES NOT introduce new ideas.

5- Look at the essay in Unit 8,  
exercise 1 on page 57 again.  
Answer these questions

## Changing English: the African American Influence

If you ask average Americans where their language comes from, they will probably say 'England'. However, English vocabulary has also been influenced by other countries and groups of people. Some words are borrowed from other languages, such as *typhoon*, which originally came from the Chinese word, 'tai-fung', meaning 'big wind'. *Skunk*, the name of a small, smelly, black-and-white animal, came to English from a Native American language. African Americans, too, have both contributed new words to English and changed the meanings of some existing words.

African Americans, many of whose ancestors were brought to the States as slaves hundreds of years ago, have introduced a number of words to English from languages that they spoke in their native countries. The common English word *OK* is used around the world today, but it was not always part of English vocabulary. One theory is that slaves in America used a phrase in their own language that sounded like *OK* to mean 'all right'. Americans heard the phrase and started using it. Today, almost everyone in the world uses *OK* to mean 'all right'. Another good example of a 'new' word is the word *jazz*. African American musicians living in the United States began playing jazz music in the city of New Orleans, and they used the word *jass* or *jazz* to describe the music and certain kinds of dancing. No one is sure where the word originally came from, but as jazz music became more and more popular, the word *jazz* became a common English word.

The meanings of words sometimes change over time. The word *cool* is a good example. *Cool* has been used in English for a long time to describe a temperature that is 'not warm but not too cold' or to describe a person who is 'calm or unemotional'. However, an additional meaning was given to the word *cool* in the past 100 years. Just like the word *jazz*, African American musicians used the word *cool* to describe the music they were playing. For them, *cool* meant 'good'. As jazz music and other forms of music played by African American musicians became popular, more and more people started to use the word *cool* in conversation. Today, it is still a commonly used word, especially by younger people, to mean 'good' or 'great'. A word with the opposite meaning of *cool* is *square*. Square is, of course, a shape, but it also is used to describe a person who is not cool. This may be because a person who is too old-fashioned and not flexible is like a shape with four straight sides and four corners.

English owes some of its interesting and colourful vocabulary to African Americans. Existing ethnic groups in the United States as well as new immigrants will surely continue to bring new words to English and give fresh meanings to existing words. Who knows what the 'cool' words of tomorrow will be?



a. Does the conclusion use any of the four techniques described above? Which ones?

**ANSWER** :The conclusion restates the thesis and makes a final comment about the essay's main idea.

B- Which sentence in the conclusion restates the thesis ( from the introduction)?

**ANSWER**: 'English owes some of its interesting and colourful vocabulary to African Americans' restates the thesis statement.

**6- Match each of these  
introduction thesis statements  
with its rewritten version for a  
conclusion**

- a. .... Supermarkets are the best places to buy food because of their convenience and lower prices.
  - b. .... Travelling abroad is a valuable learning experience.
  - c. .... Learning to play a musical instrument is very beneficial for children.
  - d. .... Creating and owning a business offers more advantages than working as an employee in a company.
  - e. .... More houses should be adapted to use solar energy because it is clean and renewable.
  - f. .... The World Wide Web can be very useful for research, but it also contains a lot of incorrect information.
- 1. People can learn many things by travelling to other countries.
  - 2. Despite the challenges, being an entrepreneur can offer more benefits than other types of employment.
  - 3. The fact that larger supermarkets offer cheap prices and a large selection of products makes them the best place for shoppers.
  - 4. The World Wide Web gives access to a huge amount of knowledge, but users shouldn't believe everything they read there.
  - 5. When children are exposed to music and are taught to play instruments such as the piano or violin, there are many positive effects.
  - 6. The sun gives a constant, free supply of clean energy, which more homes should take advantage of.

a. Supermarkets are the best places to buy food because of their convenience and lower prices.

3. The fact that larger supermarkets offer cheap prices and a large selection of products makes them the best place for Shoppers.

b . ..... Travelling abroad is a valuable learning experience.

1. People can learn many things by travelling to other countries.

c . ..... Learning to play a musical instrument is very beneficial for children.

5. When children are exposed to music and are taught to play instruments such as the piano or violin, there are many positive effects.

d . . . . . Creating and owning a business offers more advantages than working as an employee in a company.

2. Despite the challenges, being an entrepreneur can offer more benefits than other types of employment.

e . . . . . More houses should be adapted to use solar energy because it is clean and renewable.

6. The sun gives a constant, free supply of clean energy, which more homes should take advantage of.

f. The World Wide Web can be very useful for research, but it also contains a lot of incorrect information.

4. The World Wide Web gives access to a huge amount of knowledge, but users shouldn't believe everything they read there

7 Read paragraph a in Unit 8, exercise 3 on page 58 again. Choose the best concluding paragraph, below.

Before I travelled to the UK last year, I thought that British food was just fish and chips, roast beef, apple pie, rice pudding and endless cups of tea. These foods are popular in Britain, but during my travels, I discovered that there is so much more to eating in the UK. People from all over the world have made their home in Britain, and they have brought with them their own food. Even in small towns, you can find Chinese, Indian and Italian restaurants, amongst others. The UK can be divided into different regions that each has its own characteristic foods influenced by the culture of the people who live there.

b- Clearly, it is difficult to say that there is one type of British food . Every part of the country has its own special dishes based on the produce and tastes of that region. From the Ancient Britons and the Roman, Saxon and Viking invasions to present-day immigrants, the cuisine of the UK continues to change with its changing population.

# Review 9

1. interest
2. facts
3. story
4. quotation
5. topic
6. information
7. thesis
- 8 . summarises
9. restates
10. comment
11. action