

## Revising Writing: Introductions & Conclusions

1. Spend a few minutes writing, from the top of your head, about introductions and conclusions. What makes an introduction strong and successful? What makes a conclusion strong and successful?
2. Read sections from the handbook on introductions (14-17) and conclusions (17-18).
3. From among the essays we have read, choose two. Look carefully at the introductions and conclusions of those essays (and remember that an introduction or conclusion may take up more than one paragraph). Compare what you see to what the handbook says about the characteristics of successful introductions and conclusion, and briefly list the similarities and differences.
4. Go to your own essay, and read your first and second paragraphs. Which works better as an introduction? Often the second paragraph of an early draft turns out to be a better way to begin an essay than the first.
5. After completing these four activities, read your own introduction (which may be the former second paragraph) and conclusion. Underline strong sentences or lines that help you advance your point of view, and squiggle underline (or otherwise mark), those that are weak and do not speak to or advance your topic. Be brave and honest! Try cutting all the weak sections and work from the strong points.
6. Make some notes and start-rewriting. Start with the conclusion. Often it's helpful to re-write the conclusion first – then go back to the introduction.