

Writing Titles, Introductions, & Conclusions

Title Strategies

- **Wordplay Title:** Use alliteration, a rhyme, a pun, or a play on words.
- **Two-Part Title:** Use both a title and a subtitle (separated by a colon). Use a catchy main title and a more plain, straightforward subtitle.
- **Quote Title:** Use part of a famous quote, possibly adding a question mark if you are challenging it.
- **Altered Cliché:** Change part of a famous or cliché phrase.
- **Quote from a Source:** Use a short, key phrase from one of your sources as your title or part of it.
- **Thesis Title:** State your thesis or hint at it. This lets readers know what your focus is and prepares them to accept your argument.
- **Attention-Getting Title:** Try something shocking, controversial, funny, or mysterious.
- **Question Title:** Use a thought-provoking question that hints at the controversy you're addressing or that prepares the reader for your thesis.

Introduction and Opening Statement Strategies

- **Bold Opening:** Start the introduction with a shocking, intriguing, enigmatic, or unusual statement.
- **Rhetorical Question:** Start with a rhetorical question that gets to the heart of the issue or raises a provocative and unexpected debate (the question should not be too obvious or cliché).
- **Statistic Opening:** Start with a surprising or impressive fact or statistic.
- **Quote Opening:** Start with a compelling quote and then respond to it (by agreeing or disagreeing and using it as a launching pad into your argument); be sure to mention the author in an introductory phrase and to not leave the quote "floating," unless it is an epigraph (separate from the body of the paper).
- **Misconception:** Correct a popular misconception or a misconception in one of your sources and explain why it is wrong.
- **Paradoxical Opening:** Start with a paradox from your argument that seems contradictory but is true (like "You should actually try not to agree with your teacher" or "Fitting in left me feeling like an outsider" or "Free speech can really suck sometimes").
- **Narrative Opening:** Start with a story from your life, a source, or someone else's life. Use dialogue and detail to add realism.
- **Descriptive Opening:** Start with a vivid description of a scene, object, or person.
- **History of the Issue:** Start with a brief history of the topic or debate and then show how your argument will add to or differ from what others have said about it.
- **Thesis Opening:** Start with a version of your thesis statement in the form of a strong assertion, even though you will restate it in a different form at the end of the introduction.
- **Avoid:** big, abstract, meaningless statements like "Since the dawn of time, technology has been improving."

Conclusion and Closing Statement Strategies

- **The Tail-Biting Snake:** return to the story or question you started the introduction with so your paper comes full circle. You may finish the story you began or answer the question you posed in the introduction, for example.
- **The Call to Action:** End with a specific challenge to people's behaviors or attitudes, so it is clear how your argument should be put into practice and actually affect the real world.
- **The Appeal to Pathos:** End with a story or vivid description, especially one that appeals to the audience's emotions.
- **Answering "So What?":** Show the significance of your argument by relating it to bigger issues in society; discuss why your topic matters and to whom in today's culture.
- **New-but-Related Topic:** Show that your argument can apply to other situations, too. For example, if you have been discussing texting etiquette, you might briefly bring up the related issue of texting safety.
- **The Recommendation:** Akin to the call to action, this strategy is focused on your audience, but instead of challenging the audience, it gives advice. This works well for an evaluation or policy paper.
- **Avoid:** simply restating what you already said in your essay. You will lose the reader's attention just when you should be making the most impact.