THE IMPORTANCE OF INTRODUCTIONS AND CONCLUSIONS
The Role of Introductions and Conclusions

- Act as a bridge that transport your readers from their own lives into the place of your analysis

- By providing an introduction that helps your readers make a transition between their own world and the issues you will be writing about, you give your readers the tools they need to get into your topic and care about what you are saying.

- Similarly, once you've hooked your reader with the introduction and offered evidence to prove your thesis, your conclusion can provide a bridge to help your readers make the transition back to their daily lives.
Why bother writing a good introduction?

- You never get a second chance to make a first impression.

  The opening paragraph of your paper will provide your readers with their initial impressions of your argument, your writing style, and the overall quality of your work. A vague, disorganized, error-filled, off-the-wall, or boring introduction will probably create a negative impression. On the other hand, a concise, engaging, and well-written introduction will start your readers off thinking highly of you, your analytical skills, your writing, and your paper. This impression is especially important when the audience you are trying to reach (your instructor) will be grading your work.
Why bother writing a good introduction?

- Your introduction is an important road map for the rest of your paper.

  Your introduction conveys a lot of information to your readers. You can let them know what your topic is, why it is important, and how you plan to proceed with your discussion. It should contain a thesis that will assert your main argument. It will also, ideally, give the reader a sense of the kinds of information you will use to make that argument and the general organization of the paragraphs and pages that will follow. After reading your introduction, your readers should not have any major surprises in store when they read the main body of your paper.
Why bother writing a good introduction?

- Ideally, your introduction will make your readers want to read your paper.
  - The introduction should capture your readers' interest, making them want to read the rest of your paper. Opening with a compelling story, a fascinating quotation, an interesting question, or a stirring example can get your readers to see why this topic matters and serve as an invitation for them to join you for an interesting intellectual conversation.
Strategies for writing an effective introduction

- Start by thinking about the question.
- Try writing your introduction last.
- Don't be afraid to write a tentative introduction first and then change it later.
- Open with an attention grabber.
  - an intriguing example
  - a provocative quotation
  - a puzzling scenario
  - a vivid and perhaps unexpected anecdote
  - a thought-provoking question
- Pay special attention to your first sentence.
- Be straightforward and confident.
  - Instead of stating, “In my paper I will tell you about how Frederick Douglas valued education.” write a declarative statement, “Frederick Douglas valued education.”
About Conclusions

- It’s your chance to have the last word on the subject.
- It allows you to summarize your thoughts, demonstrate the importance of your ideas, and propel your reader to a new view of the subject.
- It’s your chance to make a good final impression and to end on a positive note.
- Your conclusion should make your reader feel glad they read your paper, giving them something to take away from it or appreciate your topic in a personally relevant way.
Strategies for writing an effective conclusion:

- It should answer the “so what?” questions – why should readers care about what they have read?
- Draw back on the theme from your introduction and make the reader feel like he/she has come full circle.
- Synthesize, don’t summarize – briefly summarize your main points showing how the points you made and the examples you used all work together.
- Include a provocative insight or quotation.
- Propose a course of action, a solution to an issue, or questions for further study.
- Point to broader implications, provide a life lesson.
Let’s look at some examples

- In pairs, using one of the essays provided, respond to the following questions:

1. What has the writer done to introduce the topic? Explain using examples.
2. Is the introduction engaging and clear? Are you intrigued to read the rest of the paper? Explain why or why not.
3. What has the writer done to conclude his/her topic? Explain using examples.
4. Is the conclusion engaging and clear?
5. Does the conclusion offer insight, a call for recommendation or action, leave you with a lasting thought, or other lesson? Explain.