

# ENGLISH COMPOSITION & COMPREHENSION

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# WRITING INTRODUCTIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

# ESSAY STRUCTURE

**AN ESSAY  
ALWAYS  
CONSISTS  
OF:**

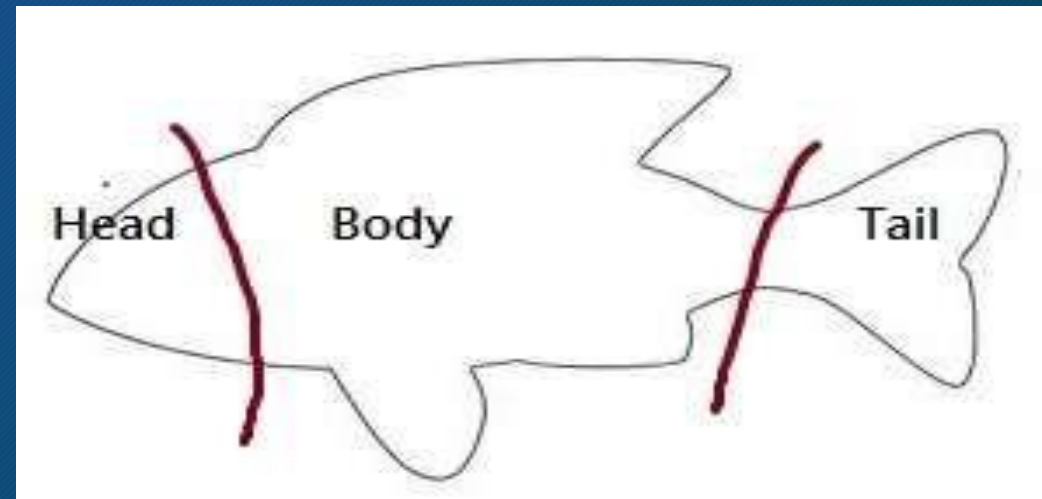
- **INTRODUCTION**
- **BODY**
- **CONCLUSION**

# 3 PART STRUCTURE

AN EASY WAY TO REMEMBER THIS **3 PART STRUCTURE** IS TO THINK OF A SIMPLE FISH WITH A **HEAD, TAIL AND BODY**.

THESE 3 PARTS MAKE UP THE WHOLE FISH—ALL 3 PARTS ARE NEEDED FOR IT TO SURVIVE.

IF YOU FORGET TO WRITE A CONCLUSION FOR EXAMPLE, IT'S LIKE A FISH WITH NO TAIL—IT WON'T BE VERY EFFECTIVE!





# WHY ARE INTRODUCTIONS AND CONCLUSIONS SO IMPORTANT?

CRAFTING THE INTRODUCTION AND CONCLUSION IS AN ESSENTIAL PART OF THE WRITING PROCESS.

A WEAK INTRODUCTION WILL MAKE A READER LOSE INTEREST ON WHILE A POOR CONCLUSION WILL NOT MAKE A LASTING IMPRESSION.

MAKE YOUR WRITING  
**BLOW**  
PEOPLE  
**AWAY**

# KEY WORDS

SOURCE: DICTIONARY.COM

## WAFFLE : WAF·FLE

VERB, WAF·FLED, WAF·FLING. 1. TO SPEAK OR WRITE AT LENGTH IN A VAGUE OR TRIVIAL MANNER: TO WAFFLE ON AN IMPORTANT ISSUE.

2. TO SPEAK OR WRITE EQUIVOCALLY ABOUT: TO WAFFLE A CAMPAIGN PROMISE. NOUN 3. WAFFLING LANGUAGE

## WORDY: WORD·Y

ADJECTIVE, WORD·I·ER, WORD·I·EST. 1. CHARACTERIZED BY OR GIVEN TO THE USE OF MANY, OR TOO MANY, WORDS; VERBOSE: SHE GREW IMPATIENT AT HIS WORDY REPLY.

## SUCCINCT: **SUC-CINCT**

/sək'sɪŋ(k)t/

ADJECTIVE 1. EXPRESSED IN FEW WORDS; CONCISE; LACONIC.  
2. CHARACTERIZED BY CONCISENESS OR VERBAL BREVITY.

## WISHY-WASHY: **WISH-Y-WASH-Y**

ADJECTIVE 1. LACKING IN DECISIVENESS; WITHOUT STRENGTH OR CHARACTER; IRRESOLUTE.  
2. WASHY OR WATERY, AS A LIQUID; THIN AND WEAK.

## AUTHORITATIVE: **AU-THOR-I-TA-TIVE**

ADJECTIVE 1. HAVING DUE AUTHORITY; HAVING THE SANCTION OR WEIGHT OF AUTHORITY: AN AUTHORITATIVE OPINION.



# INTRODUCTION

YOUR INTRODUCTION SHOULD CONSIST OF:

AN ATTENTION-  
GRABBING FIRST  
SENTENCE

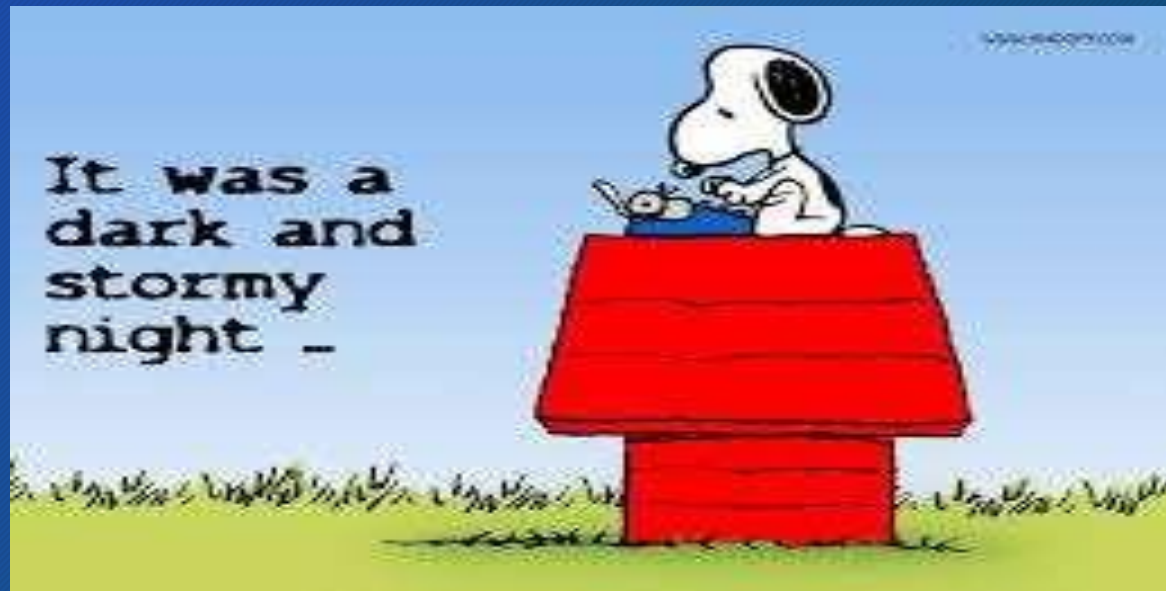
INFORMATIVE  
SENTENCES THAT  
BUILD TO YOUR  
CONTENTION

THE THESIS  
STATEMENT, WHICH  
MAKES A CLAIM OR  
STATES A VIEW THAT  
YOU WILL SUPPORT  
OR BUILD UPON



THE INTRODUCTION CREATES A FIRST IMPRESSION

THE READER FORMS AN OPINION ABOUT THE REST OF PIECE BASED ON THE INTRODUCTION



# SAMPLE TEXT ESSAY INTRODUCTION

HERE IS AN INTRODUCTION ON THE TOPIC BELOW:

“SOMETHING POWERFUL, SOMETHING DISTANT YET PRESENT,  
SOMETHING ELSE”: THE AFRICAN NEXUS OF IDENTITY IN  
MODERN AFRICAN-AMERICAN THEATRE.

IN THE FOLLOWING SLIDES, WE WILL EXAMINE HOW THE  
INTRODUCTION CAN BE WRITTEN EFFECTIVELY.

# POOR INTRODUCTION

- **HOOK:**

IN THIS ESSAY I WILL DEMONSTRATE HOW AFRICAN-AMERICAN THEATRE IS A POWERFUL DEVICE FOR THE “CREATION, APPLICATION, EVEN SUBVERSION OF NOTION OF BLACKNESS AND CONCEPTS OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN IDENTITY” (ELAM 5). I WILL SHARE EXAMPLES OF PLAYS TO HELP TO ILLUSTRATE MY POINT.



# POOR INTRODUCTION

## HOOK:

~~IN THIS ESSAY I WILL DEMONSTRATE  
HOW AFRICAN-AMERICAN THEATRE IS A  
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SUBVERSION OF NOTION OF  
BLACKNESS AND CONCEPTS OF  
AFRICAN-AMERICAN IDENTITY” (ELAM  
5). I WILL SHARE EXAMPLES OF PLAYS  
TO HELP TO ILLUSTRATE MY POINT.~~

## WHAT'S WRONG WITH THIS?

- **WORDY**
- **STATING THE OBVIOUS**
- **SHOW THE READER, DON'T TELL THEM WHAT YOU WILL DO**
- **KEEP IT SUCCINCT AND TO THE POINT**

# BETTER EXAMPLE

THE INTRODUCTION OPENS WITH A QUOTE:

AFRICAN-AMERICAN THEATRE IS A POWERFUL DEVICE FOR THE “CREATION, APPLICATION, EVEN SUBVERSION OF NOTION OF BLACKNESS AND CONCEPTS OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN IDENTITY” (ELAM 5).

WHAT'S RIGHT WITH THIS?

- TO THE POINT
- UNAMBIGUOUS
- SUCCINCT—NO WAFFLE.

# INFORMATIVE SENTENCES

PLAYWRIGHT AUGUST WILSON REMARKED THAT HIS PLAYS ARE A “CELEBRATION OF THE COLLECTIVE CULTURAL MEMORY OF AFRICA IN AFRICAN-AMERICAN EXPERIENCES.” HE WAS OF THE OPINION THAT AFRICAN-AMERICANS MUST “REDISCOVER THEIR AFRICANISMS IN ORDER TO SURVIVE IN CONTEMPORARY AMERICA” (10). LITERARY FOCUS ON AFRICA EVOLVED AFTER THE ABOLITION OF SLAVERY AS AFRICAN-AMERICANS’ LOOKED BACK TO THE CONTINENT TO RECLAIM THEIR HERITAGE AND CULTURAL VISION.



# WHAT IS A THESIS STATEMENT?

- MAIN IDEA OF AN ESSAY
- IT MUST BE CLEARLY WRITTEN IN THE INTRODUCTORY PARAGRAPH
- IT SHOULD PRESENT THE TOPIC OF YOUR ESSAY AND ALSO MAKE A COMMENT ABOUT YOUR POSITION IN RELATION TO THE TOPIC
- YOUR THESIS STATEMENT SHOULD TELL YOUR READER WHAT THE ESSAY IS ABOUT AND ALSO HELP GUIDE YOUR WRITING AND KEEP YOUR ARGUMENT FOCUSED.

# THESIS STATEMENT

## POOR EXAMPLE:

~~I WILL WRITE ABOUT HOW (OBVIOUS!)  
AFRICA BECAME THE NEXUS IN THE  
SEARCH FOR AFRICAN-AMERICAN IDENTITY.  
AFTER READING THIS ESSAY YOU WILL  
AGREE WITH ME THAT WRITERS FOCUSED  
ON AFRICA FOR INSPIRATION AND TO FIND  
OUT WHO THEY WERE. (WAFFLE!)~~

WORDY

STATING THE OBVIOUS

BORING!

## BETTER EXAMPLE:

*AFRICA BECAME THE NEXUS IN THE  
SEARCH FOR AFRICAN-AMERICAN  
IDENTITY.*

THIS SAYS THE SAME THING AS THE  
POOR EXAMPLE BUT WITHOUT THE  
WAFFLE. IT IS MUCH MORE  
INTERESTING TO READ

# THESIS STATEMENT

Don't make your reader have to work hard to find out what your thesis statement is. They will lose interest and get a bad impression of your work immediately.



Keep your thesis statement clear, simple, relevant and succinct.



# Cont.

- A THESIS CAN BE FOUND IN MANY PLACES—A DEBATE SPEECH, A LAWYER’S CLOSING ARGUMENT, EVEN AN ADVERTISEMENT. BUT THE MOST COMMON PLACE FOR A THESIS STATEMENT IS IN AN ESSAY.
- WHETHER YOU’RE WRITING AN ARGUMENTATIVE PAPER, AN INFORMATIVE ESSAY, OR A COMPARE/CONTRAST STATEMENT, YOU NEED A THESIS. WITHOUT A THESIS, YOUR ARGUMENT FALLS FLAT AND YOUR INFORMATION IS UNFOCUSED. SINCE A THESIS IS SO IMPORTANT, IT’S PROBABLY A GOOD IDEA TO LOOK AT SOME TIPS ON HOW TO PUT TOGETHER A STRONG ONE.

# Cont.

- WE'RE TALKING ABOUT A SINGLE SENTENCE THAT TIES TOGETHER THE MAIN IDEA OF ANY ARGUMENT.
- IN THE CONTEXT OF STUDENT ESSAYS, IT'S A STATEMENT THAT SUMMARIZES YOUR TOPIC AND DECLARES YOUR POSITION ON IT. THIS SENTENCE CAN TELL A READER WHETHER YOUR ESSAY IS SOMETHING THEY WANT TO READ.

# 2 CATEGORIES OF THESIS STATEMENTS: INFORMATIVE AND PERSUASIVE

- JUST AS THERE ARE DIFFERENT TYPES OF ESSAYS, THERE ARE DIFFERENT TYPES OF THESIS STATEMENTS. THE THESIS SHOULD MATCH THE ESSAY.
- FOR EXAMPLE, WITH AN INFORMATIVE ESSAY, YOU SHOULD COMPOSE AN INFORMATIVE THESIS (RATHER THAN ARGUMENTATIVE). YOU WANT TO DECLARE YOUR INTENTIONS IN THIS ESSAY AND GUIDE THE READER TO THE CONCLUSION THAT YOU REACH.

Example:

To make a peanut butter and jelly sandwich, you must procure the ingredients, find a knife, and spread the condiments.

This thesis showed the reader the topic (a type of sandwich) and the direction the essay will take (describing how the sandwich is made).



# 2 CATEGORIES OF THESIS STATEMENTS: INFORMATIVE AND PERSUASIVE

- A PERSUASIVE THESIS USUALLY CONTAINS AN OPINION AND THE REASON WHY YOUR OPINION IS TRUE.
- IN THIS PERSUASIVE THESIS STATEMENT, YOU SEE THAT I STATE MY OPINION (THE BEST TYPE OF SANDWICH), WHICH MEANS I HAVE CHOSEN A STANCE. NEXT, I EXPLAIN THAT MY OPINION IS CORRECT WITH SEVERAL KEY REASONS. THIS PERSUASIVE TYPE OF THESIS CAN BE USED IN ANY ESSAY THAT CONTAINS THE WRITER'S OPINION, INCLUDING, COMPARE/CONTRAST ESSAYS, NARRATIVE ESSAYS, AND SO ON.

Example:

Peanut butter and jelly sandwiches are the best type of sandwich because they are versatile, easy to make, and taste good.

# SOME MORE EXAMPLES

- *C.S. Lewis's Chronicles of Narnia series is one of the richest works of the 20th century because it offers an escape from reality, teaches readers to have faith even when they don't understand, and contains a host of vibrant characters.*
- IN THE ABOVE PERSUASIVE THESIS, YOU CAN SEE THE OPINION ABOUT *NARNIA* FOLLOWED BY THREE CLEAR REASONS. THIS THESIS IS PERFECT FOR SETTING UP A TIDY FIVE-PARAGRAPH ESSAY.

# SOME MORE EXAMPLES

- *Good vs. evil is the main theme of Lewis's Narnia series, as is made clear through the struggles the main characters face in each book.*
- IN THIS THESIS, THE CLAIM IS ABOUT THE THEME IN *NARNIA* FOLLOWED BY REASONING. THE BROADER SCOPE OF THIS THESIS ALLOWS TO WRITE ABOUT EACH OF THE SERIES' SEVEN NOVELS. YOU ARE NO LONGER LIMITED IN HOW MANY BODY PARAGRAPHS YOU CAN LOGICALLY USE.



# QUOTES

USE SUITABLE QUOTES TO ADD INTEREST.

QUOTES THAT ARE **DIRECT AND SHORT** AND FROM A **CREDIBLE SOURCE** ADD AUTHORITY.

**GOOD EXAMPLE:** “PLAYWRIGHT, AUGUST WILSON...”

AN AFRICAN-AMERICAN PLAYWRIGHT WAS QUOTED RATHER THAN SOME RANDOM REFERENCE.



August Wilson

# NOTICE

THERE WERE NO SCAFFOLDING SENTENCES IN THE INTRODUCTION

- *IN THIS ESSAY*
- *I WILL DEMONSTRATE*
- *I WILL DISCUSS*

THESE WEAKEN THE INTRODUCTION AND SLOW DOWN THE DELIVERY OF INFORMATION—LIKE SPEED BUMPS, THE READER HAS TO GO OVER THEM SIMPLY TO KEEP MOVING FORWARD.



# MAKE IT CLEAR

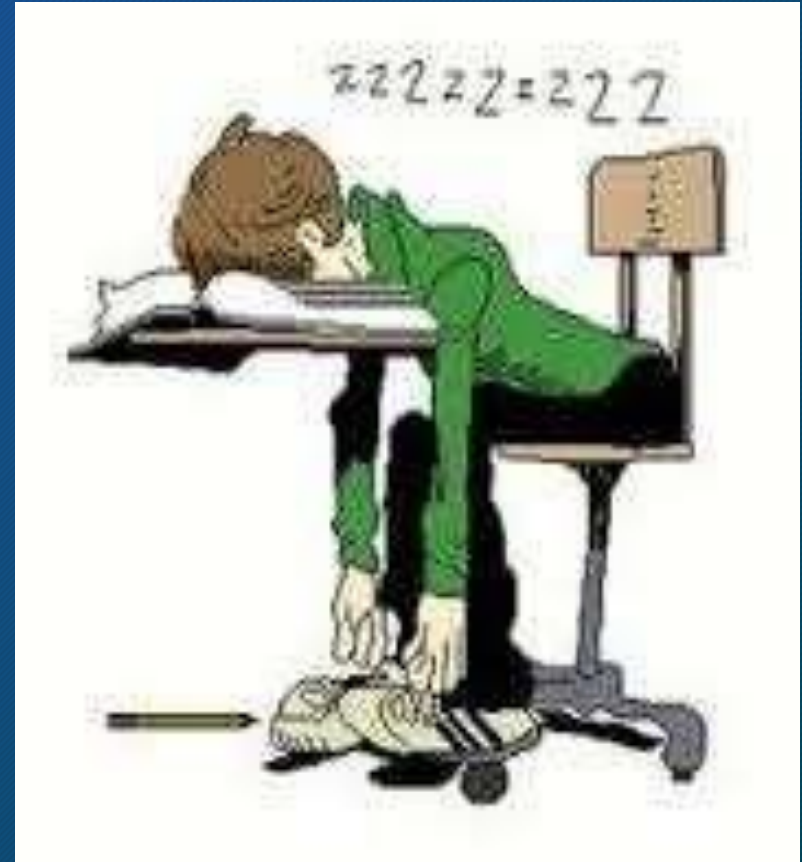
THE INTRODUCTION TELLS THE READER WHAT THE ESSAY WILL BE ABOUT, SO THE **THESIS STATEMENT** SHOULD BE **CLEAR**.

A SENSE OF HOW YOU WILL PROCEED WITH YOUR EXAMINATION OF THE TOPIC FOLLOWS. READERS SHOULD HAVE A **GOOD IDEA** ABOUT WHAT THE REST OF THE ESSAY WILL CONTAIN AFTER READING THE INTRODUCTION.



# CAPTURE ATTENTION

- A GOOD INTRODUCTION MAKES READERS WANT TO CONTINUE READING.
- **A POOR INTRODUCTION** WILL MAKE THE READER **NOT** TO CONTINUE. IF THEY DO READ ON IT WILL LEAVE A NEGATIVE IMPRESSION WITH THEM—EVEN IF THE REST OF THE PAPER IS WELL-WRITTEN.



# CREATE A DYNAMIC INTRODUCTION

AN INTRODUCTION NEEDS TO HAVE IMPACT, REMEMBER YOU ARE TRYING TO GRAB, HOLD OF AND MAINTAIN ATTENTION.

AIM TO ACTIVELY ENGAGE READERS THROUGH YOUR INTRODUCTION.



# A GOOD FIRST SENTENCE STIRS INTEREST

- MAKE THE FIRST SENTENCE INTRIGUING OR SOMEWHAT OPEN-ENDED
- BE BOLD
- BE CREATIVE

EXAMPLE FROM A PERSUASIVE PIECE ON WHY PIT-BULLS SHOULD NOT BE BANNED THE FIRST SENTENCE READS:

**ARE YOUR PAJAMAS MORE DANGEROUS THAN PIT BULLS?**

SAY WHAT? THIS SOUNDS VERY INTRIGUING, I WANT TO LEARN MORE.



# USE AUTHORITATIVE LANGUAGE

AN ESSAY NEEDS TO BE  
AUTHORITATIVE, YOU WANT TO  
ENLIGHTEN NOT BORE THE AUDIENCE  
SO BE DIRECT AND TO THE POINT.

AVOID WISHY-WASHY AND  
WEAK PHRASES



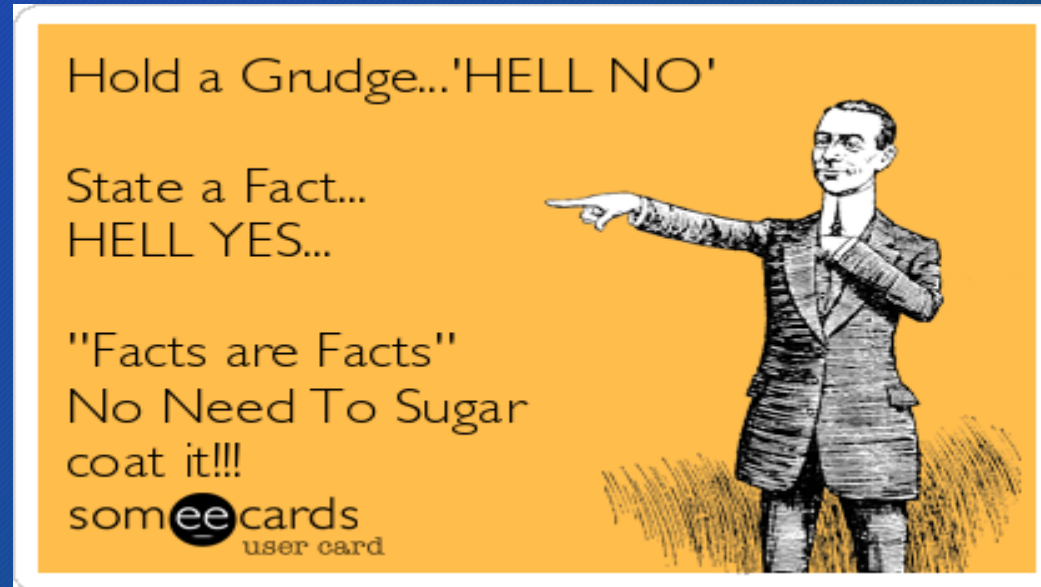
# AVOID THE WAFFLE!

~~I HOPE YOU WILL JOIN ME IN SUPPORTING UNIFORMS  
FOR OUR SCHOOLS.~~



“I **hope**” is very weak, it is like a feeble plea that begs the audience but it does not **ENGAGE** them.

# STATE A FACT



STATE A FACT THAT IS RELATED TO THE TOPIC AND SHOWS THE IMPORTANCE OF YOUR THESIS STATEMENT.



# IMPROVE THIS INTRODUCTION TO MAKE IT MORE DYNAMIC

I AM GOING TO DEMONSTRATE HOW SCHOOL UNIFORMS ENFORCE SAFETY, HAVE POSITIVE EFFECTS AND GIVE OPPORTUNITIES TO THE STUDENTS. IT ALSO BENEFITS TEACHERS AND PARENTS. I WILL ALSO ELABORATE ON THE FEW NEGATIVE EFFECTS AND HOW THEY CAN AND HAVE BEEN FIXED.

# PURPOSE OF A CONCLUSION

- TO SIGNAL THE END OF THE ESSAY
- TO WRAP UP THE VARIOUS POINTS OF YOUR ESSAY
- **THE CONCLUSION IS NOT A SUMMARY.**
- A SUMMARY SIMPLY RESTATES THE POINTS MADE IN THE PAPER WHILE A CONCLUSION WRAPS IT UP TOGETHER

A CONCLUSION BRINGS YOUR WRITING TO A CLOSE AND IDEALLY LEAVES THE READER WITH A STRONG IMPRESSION.

A WEAK CONCLUSION WILL MAKE THE READER WHY THEY BOTHERED READING IT AND THEY WON'T BE CONSIDERING THE IDEAS WORTH MENTIONED THROUGHOUT.





- END ON A FIRM, STRONG NOTE.
- DEMONSTRATE THAT YOU PROVED YOUR POINT AND SUCCESSFULLY STATED YOUR CASE.
- MAKE A LASTING IMPRESSION.



# DON'T LEAVE THE READER IN ANY DOUBT

INSTEAD OF: ~~I HOPE~~  
~~YOU WILL AGREE~~  
~~WITH ME~~ THAT PIT-  
BULLS SHOULD NOT  
BE BANNED.



WRITE: PIT-BULLS ARE  
NOT THE MONSTERS  
PEOPLE MAKE THEM OUT  
TO BE; THEY SHOULD  
NOT BE BANNED.

# THE FINAL SENTENCE

**YOUR FINAL LINE SHOULD BE A ZINGER!**

**LEAVE THE AUDIENCE WITH A CLEAR STATEMENT THAT WRAPS EVERYTHING UP.**

**GOOD EXAMPLE: *SCHOOL UNIFORMS ARE CLEARLY THE BEST WAY TO GO IF WE WANT TO ENFORCE A SAFE, PRODUCTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT IN OUR SCHOOLS.***



# CONCLUSION TO MY ESSAY

## POOR EXAMPLE:

~~HAVING READ THIS ESSAY, YOU WILL AGREE~~ THAT THEATRE ALLOWS FOR THE EXPLORATION OF CULTURE AS IT LIVES AND BREATHES... I ~~BELIEVE THAT~~ THE IDEAS ESPOUSED BY PLAYWRIGHTS, ARE THEN ADOPTED BY PERFORMERS ON STAGE. ~~IN ADDITION, I HAVE SHOWN THAT~~ THESE PLAYS NOT ONLY MIRROR COMMUNITY ATTITUDES, BUT POSSIBLY TO PROFOUNDLY IMPACT AND SHAPE SOCIAL STRUGGLES.

THEATRE ALLOWS FOR THE EXPLORATION OF CULTURE AS IT LIVES AND BREATHES. WHILE LITERATURE AND ART ARE CREATED, THEY REMAIN FROZEN IN TIME. THE IDEAS ESPOUSED BY PLAYWRIGHTS, ARE THEN ADOPTED BY PERFORMERS ON STAGE, TO NOT ONLY MIRROR COMMUNITY ATTITUDES, BUT POSSIBLY TO PROFOUNDLY IMPACT AND SHAPE SOCIAL STRUGGLES.

THE ESSAY IS NEATLY WRAPPED UP; FIRM LANGUAGE HAS BEEN USED TO ASSERT MY CONTENTION. NO WISHY-WASHY OR WEAK LANGUAGE HAS BEEN USED

# CONCLUSION CONTINUED: INFORMATIVE SENTENCE

*WHEN LARRY NEAL IN “THE BLACK ARTS MOVEMENT” CLAIMED THAT THEATRE WAS THE MOST “SOCIAL” OF THE ARTS AND THAT IT SERVED AS “AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE SOCIALIZATION PROCESS” (33), HE RECOGNIZED THE THRIVING ARTICULATION OF ISSUES SUCH AS RACE AND IDENTITY THAT THEATRE BOTH REFLECTS AND CONTRIBUTES TO.*

A QUOTE BY AN EXPERT ON THE TOPIC WAS USED TO FURTHER SUPPORT MY CONTENTION.



# CONCLUSION CONTINUED: INFORMATIVE SENTENCES

- AUGUST WILSON AND TARELL MCCRANEY EACH HAVE HARNESSSED THIS DYNAMIC ENERGY OF LIVE THEATRE TO ADDRESS THE ISSUE OF RACIAL IDENTITY IN THE UNITED STATES. BOTH WRITERS HAVE LOOKED BACK TO AFRICA AS THE SOURCE FROM WHICH THE FRAYED AND BROKEN LINKS THAT PERVADE THE LIVES OF AFRICAN-AMERICANS ORIGINATES. THEY EXAMINE ANCESTRAL BELIEFS AND SPIRITUALISM, DEMONSTRATING HOW THROUGH THEM, THE DISPLACED IN THE UNITED STATES CAN FIND THEIR WHOLE.



# THE FINAL SENTENCE

## POOR EXAMPLE:

~~THANK YOU FOR READING MY ESSAY. IN CONCLUSION, I HAVE PROVED THAT~~ HEALING AND PROGRESSION COME WITH ACCEPTANCE OF THE OLD WAYS INTO THE MODERN LIFE. AN AUTONOMOUS AFRICAN-AMERICAN CULTURE CONTINUES TO FLOURISH AND EVOLVE, ~~I HOPE YOU AGREE.~~

## BETTER EXAMPLE:

HEALING AND PROGRESSION COME WITH ACCEPTANCE OF THE OLD WAYS INTO THE MODERN LIFE. AN AUTONOMOUS AFRICAN-AMERICAN CULTURE CONTINUES TO FLOURISH AND EVOLVE.

FIRM LANGUAGE IS USED AND THE FINAL SENTENCE STATES CONFIDENTLY MY POINT OF VIEW, LEAVING NO DOUBT.

# PRACTICE

I THINK ONE OF THE IMPORTANT ISSUES THAT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD WORK MORE ON TO FIX THE IMMIGRATION BECAUSE I THINK IMMIGRATION HAS A BIG IMPACT ON THE COUNTRY'S ECONOMY.

CHANGE THIS WEAK FIRST SENTENCE INTO PERSUASIVE AND MORE INTERESTING SENTENCE.

# SUMMARY

## A GOOD INTRODUCTION CONSISTS OF:

- AN ATTENTION-GRABBING FIRST SENTENCE
- INFORMATIVE SENTENCES THAT BUILD TO YOUR CONTENTION
- THE THESIS STATEMENT, WHICH MAKES A CLAIM OR STATES A VIEW THAT YOU WILL SUPPORT OR BUILD IN AN ENTIRE ESSAY.

## A GOOD CONCLUSION:

- SIGNALS THE END OF THE ESSAY
- WRAPS UP THE VARIOUS POINTS OF YOUR ESSAY



- **ENGAGE YOUR AUDIENCE**
- **GET STRAIGHT TO THE POINT**
- **AVOID WISHY-WASHY, WEAK PHRASES**
- **USE FIRM, AUTHORITATIVE LANGUAGE**
- **END ON A STRONG NOTE**

**THANK YOU!**