

ACTIVITY 2

College offers many different challenges for students. In order to be a successful student, you should know your individual strengths and weaknesses. Take some time to think about your strengths and weaknesses as a student. Select one of your strengths or weaknesses and write a paragraph on why you believe it to be a strength or weakness. Provide three reasons why you consider it a strength or weakness, and give plenty of details to develop each of your three reasons. Notice that the sample paragraph, "The Hazards of Going to the Movies," has the same format your paragraph should have. You should do what this writer has done:

- State a point in the first sentence.
- Give three reasons to support the point.
- Introduce each reason clearly with signal words (such as *First of all*, *Second*, and *Finally*).
- Provide details that develop each of the three reasons.

Essay

An essay is simply a paper of several paragraphs, rather than one paragraph, that supports a single point. In an essay, subjects can and should be treated more fully than they would in a single-paragraph paper. Unlike paragraphs that are usually developed using one mode of writing, like description, essays are usually developed using several modes of writing to support the single point. (Albright and Langan 273).

The main idea or point developed in an essay is called the *thesis statement* or *thesis sentence* (rather than, as in a paragraph, the *topic sentence*). The thesis statement appears in the introductory paragraph, and it is then developed in the supporting paragraphs that follow. A concluding paragraph closes the essay. (*Ibid.*).

Structure of the Traditional Essay

A Model Essay

The following model is extracted from Albright and Langan's *Exploring Writing: Paragraphs and Essays* (273 – 74), and it will help you understand the form of an essay. Diane

Woods, the writer of the paragraph on moviegoing, later decided to develop her subject more fully. Here is the essay that resulted.

The Hazards of Moviegoing

I am a movie fanatic. My friends count on me to know movie trivia (who was the pigtailed little girl in E.T.: *The Extra-Terrestrial*? Drew Barrymore) and to remember every big Oscar awarded since I was in grade school (Best picture 1994? *Forrest Gump*). My friends,

though, have stopped asking me if I want to go out to the movies. While I love movies as much as ever, the inconvenience of going out, the temptations of the theater, and the behavior of some patrons are reasons for me to wait and rent the DVD.

To begin with, I just don't enjoy the general hassle of the evening. Since small local movie theaters are a thing of the past, I have to drive for fifteen minutes to get to the nearest multiplex. The parking lot is shared with several restaurants and a giant supermarket, so it's always jammed. I have to drive around at a snail's pace until I spot another driver backing

out. Then it's time to stand in an endless line, with the constant threat that tickets for the show I want will sell out. If we do get tickets, the theater will be so crowded that I won't be able to sit with my friends, or we'll have to sit in a front row gaping up at a giant screen. I have to shell out a ridiculous amount of money—up to \$11—for a ticket. That entitles me to sit while my shoes seal themselves to a sticky floor coated with spilled soda, bubble gum, and crushed Raisinets.

Second, the theater offers tempting snacks that I really don't need. Like most of us, I have to battle an expanding waistline. At home I do pretty well by simply not buying stuff that is bad for me. I can make do with snacks like celery and carrot sticks because there is no ice cream in the freezer. Going to the theater, however, is like spending my evening in a 7-Eleven that's been equipped with a movie screen and comfortable seats. As I try to persuade myself

to just have a diet Coke, the smell of fresh popcorn dripping with butter soon overcomes me. Chocolate bars the size of small automobiles seem to jump into my hands. I risk putting on the

pounds as I chew enormous mouthfuls of Milk Duds. By the time I leave the theater, I feel disgusted with myself.

Many of the other patrons are even more of a problem than the concession stand. Little kids race up and down the aisles, usually in giggling packs. Teenagers try to impress their friends by talking back to the screen, whistling, and making what they consider to be hilarious noises. Adults act as if they were at home in their own living room. They comment loudly on the ages of the stars and reveal plot twists that are supposed to be a secret until the film's end. Additionally, people of all ages create disgusting messes and rude distractions. They leave tacky remnants of candy on the hand rests, stick gum on their seats, and drop popcorn tubs or cups of crushed ice and soda on the floor. They also cough and burp, squirm endlessly in their seats, file out for repeated trips to the restrooms or concession stands, and elbow me out of the armrest on either side of my seat.

After arriving home from the movies one night, I decided that I was not going to be a moviegoer anymore. I was tired of the problems involved in getting to the theater, resisting unhealthy snacks, and dealing with the patrons. The next day, I arranged to have premium movie channels added to my cable TV service, and I also subscribed to Netflix. I may now see movies a bit later than other people, but I'll be more relaxed watching box office hits in the comfort of my own living room.

Parts of an Essay

"The Hazards of Moviegoing" is a good example of the standard short essay you will write in college English. It is a composition of over five hundred words that consists of an introduction, conclusion, and body. The introduction and conclusion are usually only one paragraph each, and the body of the essay is at least three paragraphs, but can often be more.

Introductory Paragraph

The introductory paragraph of an essay should start with several sentences that attract the reader's interest. It should then advance the central idea, or *thesis*, that will be developed in the essay. The thesis often includes a *plan of development*—a "preview" of the major points that will support the thesis. These supporting points should be listed in the order in which they will

appear in the essay. Such a thesis might assert, "Winter is my favorite season because I like the weather, the holidays, and the sports," leading to an essay that has a paragraph about weather, followed by a paragraph about the holidays, and so forth. In some cases, however, the plan of development is omitted. For example, a thesis that claims, "Education can be a key

to socioeconomic security" doesn't state how the essay will be developed, but still advances a central idea.

ACTIVITY 3

1. In "The Hazards of Moviegoing," which sentence or sentences are used to attract the reader's interest?
 - a. First sentence
 - b. First two sentences
 - ✓ c. First three sentences
2. In which sentence is the thesis of the essay presented?
 - a. Third sentence
 - ✓ b. Fourth sentence
3. Does the thesis include a plan of development?
 - ✓ a. Yes
 - b. No
4. Write the words in the thesis that announce the three major supporting points in the essay:
 - a. The inconvenience of going out
 - b. The temptations of the theater
 - c. The behavior of patrons

Body: Supporting Paragraphs

Many essays have three supporting points, developed at length over three separate paragraphs. However, more developed essays require four or more body paragraphs to support the thesis. This is very common in essays with thesis statements that omit a plan of development. Each of the supporting paragraphs should begin with a topic sentence that states the point to be detailed in that paragraph. Just as a thesis provides a focus for the entire essay, the topic sentence provides a focus for a supporting paragraph.

ACTIVITY 4

1. What is the topic sentence for the first supporting paragraph of the model essay?
I just don't enjoy the general hassle of the evening
2. The first topic sentence is then supported by the following details (fill in the missing details):
 - a. Have to drive fifteen minutes
 - b. The parking lot is shared
 - c. Endless ticket line
 - d. The theater is so crowded
 - e. Tickets are expensive
 - f. Sticky floor
3. What is the topic sentence for the second supporting paragraph of the essay?
The theater offers tempting snacks that I really don't need
4. The second topic sentence is then supported by the following details:
 - a. At home, only snacks are celery and carrot sticks.

b. Theater is like a 7-Eleven with seats.

(1) fresh popcorn

(2) chocolate bars.....

(3) Milk...drinks.....

5. What is the topic sentence for the third supporting paragraph of the essay?

.....Many....of....the....other....patrons....are....even....more....of....a....problem....
.....than....the....concession....stand.....

6. The third topic sentence is then supported by the following details:

a. Kids.....race.....up.....and.....down.....the.....aisles.....

b. Teenagers.....keep.....talking.....whistling.....and.....making.....loud.....noises.....

c. Adults talk loudly and reveal plot twists.

d. People of all ages create disgusting messes and rude distractions.

Concluding Paragraph

The concluding paragraph often summarizes the essay by briefly restating the thesis and, at times, the main supporting points. In addition, the writer often presents a concluding thought about the subject of the paper.

ACTIVITY 5

1. Which two sentences in the concluding paragraph restate the thesis and supporting points of the essay?

✓a. First and second

b. Second and third

c. Third and fourth

2. Which sentence in the concluding paragraph contains the final thought of the essay?

a. Second

b. Third

✓c. Fourth

ACTIVITY 6

Develop the previous paragraph you wrote in activity 2 into a five-paragraph essay

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٧٦ ٢٢ ٤٣ ٣٢ ٩٦/٥ ٢٣ ٤٨ ٧٧ ٣٢

ACTIVITY 7

Put the following paragraphs in the correct order.

1st paragraph: **c**.. 2nd paragraph: **b**. 3rd paragraph: **e**.. 4th paragraph: **a** 5th : **d**

The Only Thing We Have to Fear

a. However, the fear that causes the greatest damage to the human spirit is **the one that makes people question the value and fullness of their own lives**. Too many—young and old alike—are afraid that they might miss out on “the good life,” which people equate as owning the best of everything. So, they take a second and even a third job to afford the things they believe will make their lives good. This is the worst perversion of all because it turns human beings into slaves. They are owned by the possessions. The irony is, of course, that, in seeking the good life, people have lost the good life. Instead of having the luxury to relax at home, talk to family, enjoy dinner, go for long walks, or watch the sun set, too many men and women are rushing off to an evening of more work to pay off the bills.

b. **Many people are frightened they won't fit in.** To try and fit in, they spend money on things like expensive boats, cars, and clothes they feel will secure friendships. Deep in the pits of their stomachs is the gnawing fear that, without such material objects, their friends will abandon them. Then they will have to sit home alone on the weekends. They have forgotten that, to those of character, possessions and image are far less important than integrity, honesty, and compassion.

c. During the Great Depression, President Roosevelt claimed, “The only thing we have to fear is fear itself.” He wanted to inspire citizens as a way to spur the economy. In his Nobel Prize acceptance speech delivered in December 1950, William Faulkner, the great American novelist, said, “The basest of all things is to be afraid.” Uttered many decades ago, both these ideas still have relevance. Some young people make important life decisions based on deep-

seated anxieties. They fear that they won't be accepted by others, that they won't find a mate, or that they just aren't living life to the fullest.

d. Cowering to silly fears, spending too much, or changing to fit in with the ridiculous images created by a plastic society is harmful. It is blurring Americans' moral vision. People need to realize once more that the true source of happiness, the measure of a life fulfilled, is the ability to see eternal beauty in the night sky, to become inspired by gently falling snow, and to make those ever important human connections.

e. Some individuals—both men and women—fear they will never be able to attract and keep a lifelong partner. Therefore, they make enormous efforts to re-create themselves. For example, they follow ludicrous diets and exercise for hours each day. Some even drink expensive commercial concoctions to curb their appetites and lose weight. Others, looking ahead to their more mature years, plan to get collagen injections, face lifts, and even breast implants.

ACTIVITY 8

Each cluster below contains one topic, one thesis statement, and two supporting sentences. In the space provided, label each item as follows: (T topic TH thesis statement S supporting sentence)

GROUP 1

- .S. a. People listen to audiobooks while doing other tasks, such as commuting or exercising.
- .THb. Audiobooks are more convenient than printed books for several reasons.
- .S. c. Listeners hear a dramatization of a printed book by the actual author or an actor.
- T. d. Audiobooks

GROUP 2

- .S. a. A radiologic technology degree allows a person to work in medical settings where x-rays, CT scans, MRIs, sonograms, and other diagnostic imaging are needed.
- .THb. There are many career opportunities for those in the medical sciences.
- T. c. Medical sciences
- .S. d. A person who obtains a degree in phlebotomy is able to work as a clinical laboratory technician.

GROUP 3

- T. a. Study skills
- .S. b. Time management is essential when juggling deadlines and other responsibilities.
- .THc. Strong study skills are needed if a student wants to be successful in college.
- .S. d. Notetaking provides a student with the opportunity to review information later.

GROUP 4

- T. a. Shingles
- .THb. People should be aware of the symptoms of shingles, a neurological disease.
- .S. c. Burning pain is one of the first symptoms of shingles.
- .S. d. Painful skin rash and blisters often follow the burning pain.

ACTIVITY 9

This activity will sharpen your sense of the parts of an essay. "Coping with Old Age" has no indentations starting new paragraphs. Read this essay carefully, and then double-underline the thesis and single-underline the topic sentence for each of the three supporting paragraphs and the first sentence of the conclusion. Write the numbers of those sentences in the spaces provided at the end.

Coping with Old Age

1 I recently read about an area of the former Soviet Union where many people live to be well over a hundred years old. 2 Being 115 or even 125 isn't considered unusual there, and these old people continue to do productive work right up until they die. 3 The United States, however, isn't such a healthy place for older people. 4 Since I retired from my job, I've had to cope with the physical, mental, and emotional stresses of being "old." 5 For one thing, I've had to adjust to physical changes. 6 Now that I'm over sixty-five, the trusty body that carried me around for years has turned traitor. 7 Aside from the deepening wrinkles on my face and neck, and the wiry gray hairs that have replaced my brown hair, I face more frightening changes. 8 I don't have the energy I used to. 9 My eyes get tired. 10 Once in a while, I miss something that's said to me. 11 My once faithful feet seem to have lost their comfortable soles, and I sometimes feel I'm walking on marbles. 12 In order to fight against this slow decay, I exercise whenever I can. 13 I walk, I stretch, and I climb stairs. 14 I battle constantly to keep as fit as possible. 15 I'm also trying to cope with mental changes. 16 My mind was once as quick and sure as a champion gymnast. 17 I never found it difficult to memorize answers in school or to remember the names of people I met. 18 Now, I occasionally have to search my mind for the name of a close neighbor or favorite television show. 19 Because my mind needs exercise, too, I challenge it as much as I can. 20 Taking a college course like this English class, for example, forces me to concentrate. 21 The mental gymnast may be a little slow and out of shape, but he can still do a back flip or turn a somersault when he has to. 22 Finally, I must deal with the emotional impact of being old. 23 Our society typecasts old people. 24 We're supposed to be unattractive, senile, useless leftovers. 25 We're supposed to be the crazy drivers and the cranky customers. 26 At first, I was angry and frustrated that I was considered old at all. 27 And I knew that people were wrong to stereotype me. 28 Then I got depressed. 29 I even started to think that maybe I was a cast-off, one of those old animals that slow down the rest of the herd. 30 But I have now decided to rebel against these negative feelings. 31 I try to have friends of all ages and to keep up with what's going on in the world. 32 I try to remember that I'm still the same person who sat at a first-grade desk, who fell in love, who comforted a child, who got a raise at work. 33 I'm not "just" an old person. 34 Coping with the changes of old age has become my latest full-time job. 35 Even though it's a job I never applied for, and one for which I had no experience, I'm trying to do the best I can.

Thesis statement in "Coping with Old Age": 1. 4

Topic sentence of first supporting paragraph: 5.

Topic sentence of second supporting paragraph: 15

Topic sentence of third supporting paragraph: 22

Topic sentence of the conclusion: 34

Writing an essay

The four steps in writing an effective essay are the same steps you have been using to write effective paragraphs:

1. Begin with a point or thesis.
2. Support the thesis with specific evidence.
3. Organize and connect the specific evidence.
4. Write clear, error-free sentences.

Step 1: Begin with a Point or Thesis

You already know from your work on the paragraph that your first step in writing is to discover what point you want to make and to write that point out as a single sentence. There are two reasons for doing this. You want to know right from the start if you have a clear and workable thesis. Also, you will be able to use the thesis as a guide while writing your essay. At any stage you can ask yourself, "Does this support my thesis?" With the thesis as a guide, the danger of drifting away from the point of the essay is greatly reduced.

Understanding Thesis Statements

We have learned that effective essays center around a thesis, or main point, that a writer wishes to express. This central idea is usually presented as a *thesis statement* in an essay's introductory paragraph.

Just like the topic sentence of a paragraph, a good thesis statement does two things. First, it tells readers an essay's *topic*. Second, it presents the writer's *attitude, opinion, idea, or point* about that topic. For example, look at the following thesis statement:

Having a bicycle has many significant benefits.

In this thesis statement, the topic is *having a bicycle*; the writer's main point is that having a bicycle *has many significant benefits*.

Preparing to Write a Good Thesis

Now that you know how thesis statements work, you can prepare to begin writing your own. To start, you need a topic that is neither too broad nor too narrow. Suppose, for example, that you are asked to write an essay on marriage. Such a subject is too broad to cover in a five-hundred-word essay. You would have to write a book to support adequately any point you might make about the general subject of marriage. What you need to do, then, is **limit your subject**. **Narrow it down** until you have a thesis that you can deal with specifically in about five hundred words. In the box that follows there are (1) several general subjects, (2) a limited version of each general subject, and (3) a thesis statement about each limited subject.

ACTIVITY 10

Sometimes a subject must go through several stages of limiting before it is narrow enough to write about. Below are four lists reflecting several stages that writers went through in moving from a general subject to a narrow thesis statement. Number the stages in each list from 1 to 5, with 1 marking the broadest stage and 5 marking the thesis.

LIST 1

- 2.. Teachers
- 1.. Education
- 3.. Math teacher
- 5.. My high school math teacher was incompetent.
- 4.. High school math teacher

LIST 3

- 1.. Retail companies
- 2.. Supermarkets
- 4.. Dealing with customers
- 3.. Working in a supermarket
- 5.. I've learned how to handle unpleasant supermarket customers.

LIST 2

- 3. Bicycles
- 4. Dangers of bike riding
- 1. Recreation
- 2. Recreational vehicles
- 5. Bike riding in the city is a dangerous activity.

LIST 4

- 3. Camping
- 4. First camping trip
- 2. Summer vacation
- 5. My first camping trip was a disastrous experience.
- 1. Vacations

One mistake when writing a thesis statement is to simply announce the subject rather than state a true thesis. A second mistake is to write a thesis that is too broad, and a third is to write a thesis that is too narrow. An additional mistake is to write a thesis containing more than one idea. The following activities will give you practice in avoiding such mistakes and writing good thesis statements.

Write statements, not announcements

ACTIVITY 11

Write A beside each sentence that is an announcement rather than a thesis statement. Write OK beside the statement in each pair that is a clear, limited point that could be developed in an essay.

- 1. A. a. This essay will discuss the fitness classes offered at my gym.
OK b. My gym offers spinning, kick boxing, and yoga classes.
- 2. OK a. I learned the hard way that online gambling is very addictive.
A. b. My thesis in this paper is the very addictive nature of online gambling.
- 3. OK a. The Korean *jeon*, the French *crêpe*, and the American hotcake are variations of the pancake.
.A. b. Variations of the pancake is the subject of this paper.
- 4. A. a. This paper will be about the toys my cat prefers.
OK b. My cat snubs store-bought toys in favor of toilet paper rolls, twist ties, and paper bags.
- 5. A. a. My concern here is to discuss the rising fuel costs in the U.S. today.
OK b. There are several possible explanations for the rising fuel costs in the U.S. today.

Avoid statements that are too broad

ACTIVITY 12

Write TB beside each statement that is too broad to be developed in an essay. Write OK beside the statement in each pair that is a clear, limited point.

- 1. TB a. In many ways, sports are an important part of American life.
OK b. Widespread gambling has changed professional football for the worse.
- 2. TB a. Modern life makes people suspicious and unfriendly.
OK b. A frightening experience in my neighborhood has caused me to be a much more cautious person in several ways.
- 3. OK a. Toy ads on television teach children to be greedy, competitive, and snobbish.
TB b. Advertising has bad effects on all of society.
- 4. TB a. Learning new skills can be difficult and frustrating.
OK b. Learning to write takes work, patience, and a sense of humor.
- 5. TB a. I didn't get along with my family, so I did many foolish things.
OK b. Running away from home taught me that my parents weren't as terrible as I thought.

Avoid Statements That Are Too Narrow

ACTIVITY 13

1. **OK** a. I had squash, tomatoes, and corn in my garden last summer.
ON b. Vegetable gardening can be a frustrating hobby.
2. **T.N** a. The main road into our town is lined with billboards.
OK b. For several reasons, billboards should be abolished.
3. **OK** a. There are now more single-parent households in our country than ever before.
T.N b. Organization is the key to being a successful single parent.
4. **OK** a. My first job taught me that I had several bad work habits.
T.N b. Because I was late for work yesterday, I lost an hour's pay and was called in to see the boss.
5. **T.N** a. Americans abuse alcohol because it has become such an important part of their personal and public celebrations.
OK b. Consumption of wine, beer, and hard liquor increases in the United States every year.

Introductory Paragraph

Functions of the Introduction

A well-written introductory paragraph performs four important roles:

1. It attracts the reader's interest, encouraging him or her to continue reading the essay.
2. It supplies any background information that the reader may need to understand the essay.
3. It presents a thesis statement. This clear, direct statement of the main idea of the essay usually appears near the end of the introductory paragraph.
4. It indicates a plan of development. In this "preview," the major supporting points for the thesis are listed in the order in which they will be presented. In some cases, the thesis and plan of development appear in the same sentence. However, writers sometimes choose not to describe the plan of development.

Common Methods of Introduction

Here are some common methods of introduction. Use any one method, or a combination of methods, to introduce your subject to the reader in an interesting way.

1. **Begin with a broad, general statement of your topic and narrow it down to your thesis statement.** Broad, general statements ease the reader into your thesis statement by first introducing the topic. In the example below, the writer talks generally about diets and then narrows down to comments on a specific diet.

Bookstore shelves today are crammed with dozens of different diet books. The American public seems willing to try any sort of diet, especially the ones that promise instant, miraculous results. Authors are more than willing to invent new fad diets to cash in on this craze. Unfortunately, some of these fad diets are ineffective or even unsafe. One of the worst fad diets is the Cookie Diet. It is impractical, does not achieve the results it claims, and is a sure route to poor nutrition.

2. **Start with an idea or a situation that is the opposite of the one you will develop.** This approach works because your readers will be surprised, and then intrigued, by the contrast between the opening idea and the thesis that follows it.

When I decided to return to school at age thirty-five, I wasn't at all worried about my ability to do the work. After all, I was a grown woman who had raised a family, not a confused teenager fresh out of high school. But when I started classes, I realized that those "confused teenagers" sitting around me were in much better shape for college than I was. They still had all their classroom skills in bright, shiny condition, while mine had grown rusty from disuse. I had to learn how to use the library's databases, how to write a research paper, and even how to speak up in class discussions.

3. **Explain the importance of your topic to the reader.** If you can convince your readers that the subject in some way applies to them, or is something they should know more about, they will want to keep reading.

Diseases like scarlet fever and whooping cough used to kill more young children than any other cause. Today, however, child mortality due to disease has been almost completely eliminated by medical science. Instead, car accidents are the number-one killer of children and young adults under twenty-four. Most of the children fatally injured in car accidents

were not protected by car seats, belts, or restraints of any kind. Several steps must be taken to reduce the serious dangers car accidents pose to our children.

4. Use an incident or a brief story. Stories are naturally interesting. They appeal to a reader's curiosity. In your introduction, an anecdote will grab the reader's attention right away. The story should be brief and should be related to your main idea. The incident in the story can be something that happened to you, something you have heard about, or something you have read about in a newspaper, magazine, or online.

Early Sunday morning the young mother dressed her little girl warmly and gave her a candy bar, a picture book, and a well-worn stuffed rabbit. Together, they drove downtown to a Methodist church. There the mother told the little girl to wait on the stone steps until children began arriving for Sunday school. Then the young mother drove off, abandoning her five-year-old because she couldn't cope with being a parent anymore. This incident is one of thousands of cases of child neglect and abuse that occur annually. Perhaps the automatic right to become a parent should no longer exist. Would-be parents should be forced to apply for parental licenses for which they would have to meet three important conditions.

To develop

5. Use a quotation. A quotation can be something you have read in a book or an article. It can also be something that you have heard: a popular saying or proverb ("Never give advice to a friend"), a current or recent advertising slogan ("Just do it"), or a favorite expression used by friends or family ("My father always says . . ."). Using a quotation in your introductory paragraph lets you add someone else's voice to your own.

"Fish and visitors," wrote Benjamin Franklin, "begin to smell after three days." Last summer, when my sister and her family came to spend their two-week vacation with us, I became convinced that Franklin was right. After only three days of my family's visit, I was thoroughly sick of my brother-in-law's corny jokes, my sister's endless complaints about her boss, and their children's constant invasions of our privacy.

6. Include a startling statement and/or statistic. Some essays start with statements or statistics (numerical data) that may shock readers and get them so intrigued that they want to read more. Some paragraphs use both statistics and a startling statement to capture readers' interest.

The Spanish influenza (flu) was a pandemic that, between 1918 and 1920, reached every corner of the earth, including the Arctic and the most remote Pacific islands. Unlike most other flus, this one attacked healthy young men and women primarily, not the very old or the very young. Scientists estimate that the disease killed 50 to 100 million people worldwide. Even more significantly, the Spanish influenza was caused by a strain of the H1N1 virus that threatens the world today.

ACTIVITY 1

The box below summarizes the six kinds of introduction. Read the introductions that follow it and, in the space provided, write the letter of the kind of introduction used in each case.

- | | | |
|----------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| A. General to narrow | B. Starting with an opposite | C. Stating importance of topic |
| D. Incident or story | E. Quotation | F. Startling statement or statistic |

1. **B**

The ad, in full color on a glossy magazine page, shows a beautiful kitchen with gleaming counters. In the foreground, on one of the counters, stands a shiny new food processor. Usually, a feminine hand is touching it lovingly. Around the main picture are other, smaller shots. They show mounds of perfectly sliced onion rings, thin rounds of juicy tomatoes, heaps of matchstick-sized potatoes, and piles of golden, evenly grated cheese. The ad copy tells the reader how wonderful, how easy, food preparation will be with a processor. Don't believe it. My processor turned out to be expensive, difficult to operate, and very limited in its use.

2. **E**

My father stubbornly says, "You *can* often tell a book by its cover," and when it comes to certain paperbacks, he's right. Whenever a person is browsing in the drugstore or supermarket and he or she sees a paperback featuring an attractive young woman in a low-cut dress fleeing from a handsome dark figure in a shadowy castle, it is obvious what the book will be about. Every romance novel has the same elements: an innocent heroine, an exotic setting, and a cruel but fascinating hero.

3. **A C**

Americans are incredibly lazy. Instead of cooking a simple, nourishing meal, they heat up a frozen dinner in the microwave. Instead of studying a daily newspaper, they are content with quick summaries on social media. Worst of all, instead of walking even a few blocks to the local convenience store, they jump into their cars. This dependence on the automobile, even for short trips, has robbed Americans of a valuable experience—walking. If Americans drove less and walked more, they would save money, become healthier, and discover fascinating things about their surroundings.

Concluding Paragraph

A concluding paragraph is your chance to remind the reader of your thesis idea and bring the paper to a natural and graceful end.

Common Methods of Conclusion

You may use any one of the methods below, or a combination of methods, to round off your paper.

1. End with a summary and final thought. When army instructors train new recruits, each of their lessons follows a three-step formula:

- a. Tell them what you're going to tell them.
- b. Tell them.
- c. Tell them what you've told them.

An essay that ends with a summary is not very different. After you have stated your thesis ("Tell them what you're going to tell them") and supported it ("Tell them"), you restate the thesis and supporting points ("Tell them what you've told them"). However, don't use the exact wording you used before. Here is a summary conclusion:

Catalog shopping at home, then, has several advantages. Such shopping is convenient, saves money, and saves time. It is not surprising that growing numbers of devoted catalog shoppers are welcoming those full-color mail brochures that offer everything from eggplant seeds to electronic devices.

Note that the summary is accompanied by a final comment that "rounds off" the paper and brings the discussion to a close. This combination of a summary and a final thought is the most common method of concluding an essay.

2. Include a thought-provoking quotation. A well-chosen quotation can be effective in re-emphasizing your point. Here is an example:

Rude behavior has become commonplace and needs to stop. People no longer treat each other with the respect and courtesy they should. People talk on their cell phones at inappropriate times and places. Cutting off other drivers in order to save mere seconds happens more and more often. As the Dalai Lama said, "Love and kindness are the very basis of society. If we lose these feelings, society will face tremendous difficulties; the survival of humanity will be endangered."

3. End with a prediction or recommendation. Predictions and recommendations appeal to the reader to continue thinking about the essay. A prediction states what may happen in the future:

If people stopped to think before acquiring pets, there would be fewer instances of cruelty to animals. Many times, it is the people who adopt pets without considering the expense and responsibility involved who mistreat and neglect their animals. Pets are living creatures. They do not deserve to be treated as carelessly as one would treat a stuffed toy.

A recommendation suggests what should be done about a situation or problem:

Stereotypes such as the helpless homemaker, harried executive, and dotty grandparent are insulting enough to begin with. In online ads or television commercials, they become even more insulting. Now these unfortunate characters are not just being laughed at; they are being turned into peddlers to sell products to an unsuspecting public. Consumers should boycott companies whose advertising continues to use such stereotypes.

ACTIVITY 2

In the space provided, identify each concluding paragraph. If the concluding para-graph is a summary and final thought, write S in the space; if it is a prediction or recommendation, write P/R; if it is a quotation, write Q.

1. Recommendation

Even though tens of thousands of people die each year in the United States from lung cancer, there are steps that can be taken to reduce risk factors. Smokers should stop smoking. People should avoid being around smokers, ask those smoking to stop, or leave if others are smoking. Life is too valuable to have it ended by this disease.

2. Quote

My father spent thirty years smoking three packs of cigarettes a day, a habit that he thought was more harmful to his wallet than to his lungs. According to the American Society of Addiction Medicine, “[n]icotine dependence is the most common form of chemical dependence in the United States . . . and [in 1989] caused more than 400,000 premature deaths in the United States.” My father was one of them.

3. Summary

Lung cancer, then, can spread to the esophagus, the trachea, and the heart. Although an operation to remove the tumor is often unlikely, there are treatments available to control its spread. More research, however, is needed to find a cure.

ACTIVITY 3

The following box lists six common kinds of introductions and three common kinds of conclusions. Read the three pairs of introductory and concluding paragraphs that follow. Then, in the space provided, write the letter of the kind of introduction and conclusion used in each paragraph.

Introductions

- A. General to narrow
- B. Starting with an opposite
- C. Stating importance of topic
- D. Incident or story
- E. Quotation
- F. Startling statement and/or statistic

Conclusions

- G. Summary and final thought
- H. Quotation
- I. Prediction or recommendation

PAIR I

... Shortly before Easter, a local elementary school sponsored a fundraising event at which classroom pets and their babies—hamsters, guinea pigs, and chicks—were available for adoption. Afterward, a young boy found a guinea pig huddled by the side of the road. One of the parents must have taken the pet, regretted the decision, and decided to get rid of it. Many have never stopped to consider the several real obligations involved in owning a pet.

... A pet cannot be thrown onto a trash heap when it is no longer wanted or tossed into a closet if it begins to bore its owner. A pet, like us, is a living thing that needs attention and care. Would-be owners, therefore, should think seriously about their responsibilities before they acquire a pet.

PAIR 2

... “Few things are harder to put up with,” said Mark Twain, “than the annoyance of a good example.” Twain obviously knew the problems faced by siblings cursed with older brothers or sisters who are models of perfection. All our lives, my older sister Shelley and I have been compared. Unfortunately, in competition with my sister’s virtues, my looks, talents, and accomplishments always ended up on the losing side.

... Although I always lost in the sibling contests of looks, talents, and accomplishments, Shelley and I have somehow managed not to turn into deadly enemies. Feeling like the “dud” of the

family, in fact, helped me to develop a drive to succeed and a sense of humor. In our sibling rivalry, we both managed to win.

PAIR 3

...
In 2011, the school board sent out a letter laying out all the changes that were going to occur for the future school year. In an effort to cut costs, music classes, physical education classes, art classes, and honors classes were no longer going to be offered. When Franklin D. Roosevelt was president, he stated that “[t]he school is the last expenditure upon which America should be willing to economize.” Despite the budget crisis that the school district faces, FDR’s words must be heeded and a better plan must be made in order not to put the education of our students at risk.

...
Cutting classes like music and physical education is a mistake. Students should not be put at risk by taking away the very classes that create culture and focus on the health of the population. If the school board continues to cut funding from education, it is ensuring that the future for our children will be bleak.