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## Introductions and Conclusions

Effective introductions provide both the **thesis**, the central claim, of the essay, and an **essay map** for the text. An essay map gives the reader a brief taste of how the thesis will be proven.

### Establishing the Thesis:

The thesis provides the central claim or argument that the writer will prove. In the body, the writer must offer support for the thesis and must persuade readers that the thesis is valid. Points to consider when establishing the thesis:

- A thesis must be arguable. For example, *There are many problems facing the United States* is not a thesis because it is an observable fact, not an argument.
- A thesis should be concise and manageable – state it in one or two sentences.
- Effective theses are specific. For example, *Guns should be outlawed* is too broad and would require the writer to make all sorts of concessions and clarifications. A more specific thesis, *Gun vendors should only sell guns to buyers who show familiarity with gun safety laws*, will not require much clarification.

### Establishing the Essay Map:

The essay map will guide readers to the various points made in support of the thesis. It also organizes the essay, allowing readers to anticipate where the writer is going next. Points to consider when establishing the essay map:

- Effective essay maps often make use of metacommentary, in which the writer explains what the essay will do. Example: *This essay discusses two issues that threaten this organization: lack of accountability and inadequate recordkeeping.*
- An essay map lists major points (*lack of accountability and inadequate recordkeeping*); the essay should address those points in the same order given in the essay map.

### Conclusions:

Conclusions bring the essay to a thoughtful close and demonstrate why the argument and topic remain important to readers. Although writer should not restate the essay map—readers already know what points were covered, writers should briefly restate (in new words) the thesis. Points to consider when writing a conclusion:

- Remind readers what you set out to prove but do not bore them by repeating yourself.
- Remind your readers why you wrote this paper—why is your paper useful to them?
- Strong conclusions do not just taper off; they leave readers with something to think about or compel them to take some action. Example: *If we continue to ignore this problem, it will only get worse. Therefore, it is in our best interest to elect representatives who will give it their full attention.*
- In scientific writing, it is common for conclusions to call for further research into another underexplored aspect of the issue.