



# RHEMA: THE LIVING WORD

The Writing Center of Vanguard University  
Second Floor of Scott Academic Center inside English & Spanish Departments



Volume 9, Issue 1

Fall 2009

## In the Red Binder: Appointments at the Writing Center

Drop by the Writing Center to reserve a half-hour appointment with a writing consultant who will guide you towards revising your paper. We are process-oriented, so feel free to ask questions; our goal is to help you develop and improve your writing and analytical skills, not only to “check” your paper for grammar errors.

At the end of the appointment, the tutor will stamp your paper with the Writing Center Stamp. Appointments should be made at least a week in advance, so plan ahead! You must be present during your appointment; we do not accept “dropped off” papers; consultants also don’t write papers for you. Appointments are not guaranteed by voicemail messages; you must drop by to reserve an appointment in our red binder. Walk-ins are taken depending upon schedule availability. See you soon!

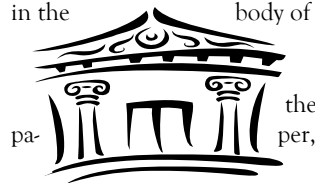
## Introductions and Conclusions by Bethany Schaefer

The introduction and conclusion of an essay are the two most important paragraphs of any paper. While the introduction draws the reader in and addresses the topic, the conclusion brings closure to the paper and reader.

The introduction is the opening paragraph of a paper that concisely summarizes the essay. Depending on the length of the paper, the introduction is relatively short, consisting of about four to five sentences. Usually the first sentence of an introduction addresses a very broad concern that most readers can identify with. As the sentences progress, the topic becomes narrower simulating

a “funnel” effect. Typically, the last sentence of an introduction contains the thesis statement where it specifically states the main points of the paper.

No matter how wonderful the information is presented in the body of



the paragraph if it does not have a solid, clear, and interesting introduction it will not be looked at any further by the reader. Thus, the challenge is making an introduction that suits both the paper topic and audience. There are several ways to create

ate a good introduction.

First, and perhaps the most scholarly approach, is writing a declarative style introduction where it directly states what the paper is addressing. No frills, fancy jargon, or catchy metaphors are included in this opening paragraph. For example, someone who is writing a paper for a professor about themes found in Mary Shelley’s book *Frankenstein* or who is discussing the significance of an aging population may use this declarative approach.

Another strategy for introductions is known as the historical review. Some current topics impact the reader more if background information is given. When the link *(over)*

## One-Hour Appointments for Grammar Bugaboos

In addition to offering individual writing consultations (whether for outlines, thesis statements, atomistic and holistic revision), the Writing Center also offers one-hour guided sessions for specific sentence-level problems called “Grammar Bugaboos.”

Professors may identify recurring problems in a student’s writing and require him or her to work on specific study modules. One-hour appointments are available for Fragments & Clauses, Modifiers, Pronouns, Run-on Sentences, Sentence-Level Revision, Commas,

Apostrophes, Commonly Confused Words, Subjects, Subject-Verb Agreement, and Verbs. We are also interested in your suggestions, so if you’d like to recommend a “Grammar Bugaboo,” please feel free to let us know.

The Writing Center supplements the modules with interactive grammar activities using Blue Pencil software available on the Writing Center’s computers. The “Grammar Bugaboo” handouts are available on our Writing Center website at [www.vanguard.edu/writingcenter](http://www.vanguard.edu/writingcenter).

## Introductions and Conclusions by Bethany Schaefer (cont. from p.1)



*“For the word of God  
is living and active.  
Sharper than any  
double-edged sword,  
it penetrates even  
to dividing soul and  
spirit, joints and  
marrow; it judges the  
thoughts and attitudes  
of the heart.”*

(NIV, Hebrews 4.12 )

between historical events and recent occurrences is made evident, the reader can better understand the significance of issues presented in the paper. A paper discussing racial violence in schools today could include in the introduction an overview of segregation in the 1950's in America.

More creative approaches in grabbing the reader's attention are beginning a paper with a surprising statement or question. Surprising statements cause the reader's emotions to range from joy to horror depending on the sentence. A paper concerning rape may have the most impact if a statistic that shows that most rapes are committed by someone the victim knows is supplied in the introduction. A thought-provoking question can also be helpful in grabbing the reader's attention. Although these strategies are more unique approaches to introductions, they must be contemplated if they should be used and carefully executed.

Contrasting the introduction, the conclusion of a paper brings closure to the topic addressed. The conclusion is the last paragraph that summarizes the main points of the paper. A direct affirmation or call to action should be included in the conclusion, but it must be based on information provided earlier in the body of the paper. Since the conclusion is trying to “wrap up” the paper, no new information or insights should be in this closing paragraph. A modified form of the thesis statement is found in this paragraph. Because the reader knows more about the topic, the thesis should be worded differently to provide deeper understanding.

A conclusion appears like an inverse introduction. Typically, the re-worded thesis is the first sentence of the closing paragraph. Then, it expands as the ideas and main points of the paper are reiterated. A broad, universalizing sentence ends the paper, displaying that the topic is applicable to many things.

Since introductions and conclusions have similar characteristics of listing main points and having a thesis statement, a writer should read these two paragraphs together to observe the continuity of the writing. As the most important paragraphs of an essay, introductions and conclusions must be viewed with a revising eye so they will accurately convey the ideas presented and truly captivate the reader.

Here are relevant websites for useful supporting information on introductions and conclusions:

<http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar>  
<http://www.powa.org/thesis/intros.html>

– Bethany Schaefer

### *Things You Should Not Do in an Introduction:*

- Sound insecure: “In my humble opinion . . .” / “Maybe the reason is . . .”
- Announce your intentions: “In this paper I will prove . . .”

### *Things You Should Not Do in a Conclusion:*

- Announce you're done: “In conclusion . . .”
- Provide new information: “Interestingly, another thing that is good is . . .”

### *Conclusion Questions:*

- “What do I want my readers to remember most about my paper?”
- “What is my last thought that I want to imprint on their minds?”