**Introduction**

The introduction is the broad beginning of the paper that answers three important questions:

1. What is this?
2. Why am I reading it?
3. What do you want me to do?

You should answer these questions by doing the following:

1. Set the context –provide general information about the main idea, explaining the situation so the reader can make sense of the topic and the claims you make and support
2. State why the main idea is important –tell the reader why he or she should care and keep reading. Your goal is to create a compelling, clear, and convincing essay people will want to read and act upon
3. State your thesis*/*claim –compose a sentence or two stating the position you will support with **logos** (sound reasoning: induction, deduction), **pathos** (balanced emotional appeal), and **ethos** (author credibility).

If your argument paper is long, you may want to forecast how you will support your thesis by outlining the structure of your paper, the sources you will consider, and the opposition to your position. You can forecast your paper in many different ways depending on the type of paper you are writing. Your forecast could read something like this:

First, I will define key terms for my argument, and then I will provide some background of the situation. Next I will outline the important positions of the argument and explain why I support one of these positions. Lastly, I will consider opposing positions and discuss why these positions are outdated. I will conclude with some ideas for taking action and possible directions for future research.

When writing a research paper, you may need to use a more formal, less personal tone. Your forecast might read like this:

This paper begins by providing key terms for the argument before providing background of the situation. Next, important positions are outlined and supported. To provide a more thorough explanation of these important positions, opposing positions are discussed. The paper concludes with some ideas for taking action and possible directions for future research.

Ask your instructor about what tone you should use when providing a forecast for your paper.

These are very general examples, but by adding some details on your specific topic, a forecast will effectively outline the structure of your paper so your readers can more easily follow your ideas.

# Conclusions

Conclusions wrap up what you have been discussing in your paper. After moving from general to specific information in the introduction and body paragraphs, your conclusion should begin pulling back into more general information that restates the main points of your argument. Conclusions may also call for action or overview future possible research. The following outline may help you conclude your paper:

In a general way,

* Restate your topic and why it is important,
* Restate your thesis/claim,

Remember that once you accomplish these tasks, unless otherwise directed by your instructor, you are finished. Done. Complete. Don't try to bring in new points or end with a whiz bang(!) conclusion or try to solve world hunger in the final sentence of your conclusion. Simplicity is best for a clear, convincing message.

The preacher's maxim is one of the most effective formulas to follow for argument papers:

1. Tell what you're going to tell them (introduction).
2. Tell them (body).
3. Tell them what you told them (conclusion).