Introductions:
• Present a clear and specific thesis statement
• Target a specific audience
• Provide context and background information to support thesis
• Define any key terms that pertain to discussion
• Establish tone (informative, persuasive, serious, humorous, personal, formal, or informal)

Conclusions:
• Summarize main points
• Recall key information
• Make strong, concise statements that will stay in readers’ minds
• Use the same unique elements found in introduction to give the essay symmetry, such as apt quotation, provocative question, dramatic anecdote, or hard fact

What to avoid in introductions:
• Being too vague or telling readers the obvious
• Referring to writing intentions (In this essay, I will . . .)
• Using extravagant claims (This essay will prove . . .)
• Restating the assigned question
• Using clichés
• Asking questions that the essay does not answer

What to avoid in conclusions:
• Using the phrase “In conclusion . . .”
• Apologizing for inadequacy or for holding opinions
• Introducing a completely new argument or direction
• Contradicting what was said previously
• Being too sweeping (condemning the whole because of the part)

Works Cited