

4.2 Writing introductions and conclusions

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____ **Total: 13 marks**

KEY WORDS conclusion 结论 • introduction 引言

Objective

Build the skills to write an **introduction** 引言 and **conclusion** 结论 that do work.

You must be able to:

- open with something that earns the reader’s attention and sets up the thesis
- place a thesis where it can be found
- close without merely restating the introduction
- avoid the two standard failures: the empty opening and the summary ending

1 Worked examples

Study these first. Each one shows the method for a task used later.

■ **An opening that works**

Begin with the exigence, a specific case, or the objection you must overcome — anything that makes the thesis necessary. “Since the beginning of time, people have argued about education” makes nothing necessary.

■ **Placing the thesis**

Usually at the end of the introduction, where the reader has enough context to understand it. A thesis in the first sentence often arrives before it can mean anything.

■ **A conclusion that earns its place**

State what follows now that the argument has been made: the implication, the cost of ignoring it, the question it opens. A conclusion that summarises tells the reader what they have just read.

2 Practice

2.1 State two things an effective opening can do. [2]

2.2 Explain why a summary conclusion is weak. [2]

2.3 An essay opens: “Throughout history, humans have used technology.”

(a) State the weakness. [1]

(b) Rewrite the opening for an essay on classroom phone bans. [2]

3 Exam-style questions

3.1 A thesis is usually best placed [1]

- **A** in the first sentence
- **B** at the end of the introduction
- **C** in the middle of the essay
- **D** in the final sentence only

3.2 A strong conclusion most often states [1]

- **A** what was said
- **B** what follows now that the argument has been made
- **C** the writer’s name
- **D** a new thesis

3.3 Write an introduction of two to three sentences for: “Should museums return objects taken during colonial rule?” [4]

Solutions

2.1 any two of: state the exigence; give a specific case; name the objection to be overcome; establish common ground.

2.2 it tells the reader what they have just read and adds nothing they did not already have.

2.3 (a) it is general enough to open any essay and makes nothing necessary. (b) a specific opening tied to the exigence, e.g. a school that banned phones and what happened next.

3.1 B. by then the reader has the context to understand it.

3.2 B. the conclusion states the implication of the argument.

3.3 specific opening that establishes exigence or a case; a defensible thesis placed where it can be found.