Introductions and Conclusions
Foundation Lesson

About this Lesson
Students often have trouble beginning and ending argumentation essays, and they fall back on formulaic tactics because they are unsure how to approach the task. This lesson helps students identify effective organizational strategies for introductions and conclusions in professional models and apply those strategies to their own writing.

This lesson is included in Module 12: Writing the Persuasive Essay.

Objectives
Students will
- use professional models to identify effective strategies for writing introductions and conclusions.
- determine the most effective strategies to use for creating their own introductions and conclusions and apply them to a persuasive writing assignment.

Level
Grades Six through Ten

Connection to Common Core Standards for English Language Arts
LTF® Foundation Lessons are designed to be used across grade levels and therefore are aligned to the CCSS Anchor Standards. Teachers should consult their own grade-level-specific Standards. The activities in this lesson allow teachers to address the following Common Core Standards:

Explicitly addressed in this lesson

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Level of Thinking</th>
<th>Depth of Knowledge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R.1</td>
<td>Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it. Cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.</td>
<td>Understand</td>
<td>III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R.5</td>
<td>Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.</td>
<td>Analyze</td>
<td>III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R.6</td>
<td>Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.</td>
<td>Analyze</td>
<td>III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W.1</td>
<td>Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.</td>
<td>Create</td>
<td>IV</td>
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<tr>
<td>R.10</td>
<td>Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.</td>
<td>Understand</td>
<td>II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L.1</td>
<td>Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.</td>
<td>Understand</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L.2</td>
<td>Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.</td>
<td>Understand</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W.4</td>
<td>Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.</td>
<td>Create</td>
<td>III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W.10</td>
<td>Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.</td>
<td>Apply</td>
<td>III</td>
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**LTF Skill Focus**

The foundation for LTF English lessons is the Skill Progression Chart that identifies key skills for each domain, beginning with grade 6 and adding more complex skills at each subsequent grade level while reinforcing skills introduced at previous grade levels. The Skill Focus for each individual lesson identifies the skills actually addressed in that lesson.

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<td>purposeful use of language for effect</td>
<td>written, spoken, and visual products</td>
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**Levels of Thinking**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Remember</th>
<th>Understand</th>
<th>Apply</th>
<th>Analyze</th>
<th>Evaluate</th>
<th>Create</th>
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**Reading Strategies**
- Determining Author’s Purpose
- Inference
- Prediction

**Literary Elements**
- Point of View
- Tone
  - vocabulary associated with tone

**Literary Forms**
- Nonfiction

**Types**
- Persuasive (argumentative) request

**The Process of Composition**
- Prewriting
- determination of purpose
- organization of ideas
- Revision
- organization

**Structural Elements**
- Introduction
- thesis
- Conclusion

**Style/Voice**
- Imitation of Stylistic Models
Connections to AP*  
The persuasive essay is a significant component of the AP English Language Exam. In order to be successful on this exam, students will be expected to write effective introductions and conclusions that vary from the formulaic and expected.

*Advanced Placement and AP are registered trademarks of the College Entrance Examination Board. The College Board was not involved in the production of this material.

Materials and Resources  
- copies of the Student Activity

Assessments  
The following kinds of formative assessments are embedded in this lesson:
- guided questions
- writing assignments

The following additional assessments are located on the LTF website under “Grade Level Assessments”:
- Sixth Grade Persuasion Assessment: Barack Obama’s “The Audacity of Hope”
- Seventh Grade Persuasion Assessment: Annie Dillard’s “Talent”
- Eighth Grade Persuasion Assessment: “Auschwitz: A New History”
- Ninth Grade Persuasion Assessment: Arnold Schwarzenegger’s “Speech to the National Republican Convention”
- Tenth Grade Persuasion Assessment: Christopher Columbus’ “Letter on the Fourth Voyage”

Teaching Suggestions  
While the organizational strategies presented here for writing introductions and conclusions are useful for any writing task, teachers are encouraged to use this particular lesson as part of a larger unit on persuasive writing. The professional models used here are informal in tone, so teachers who wish students to adopt a more formal tone and structure may wish to supplement the lesson with a professional model more aligned with their needs.

Teachers should work through Activity One with students in a whole class setting to model analytical thinking and to point out different strategies students can use in their own writing. Students then may complete the remainder of the activities in small groups or individually, as appropriate.

Answers  
The following answers are suggestions; answers for this lesson are subjective and will vary. To obtain the maximum benefit of the lesson, ask students to go beyond the expected responses.

Activity One  
Passage One—“Supersize Me”
1. The author describes eating a supersized meal.
2. first person
3. to offer an interesting anecdote to open her article; to establish her experience with the topic
4. a startling statement, fact, or statistic; an anecdote, a vivid scene, a description of the topic that does not name it
5. Answers will vary, but students will want to consider her surprise, her disgust, or her incredulousness at the size of the entrée.
6. Answers will vary.

Passage Two—“Pushing the Envelope”
1. The USPS is facing bankruptcy.
2. first person
3. He explains why he cares about the USPS’s fate; he uses humor as a persuasive device.
4. a startling statement, fact, or statistic; a quotation related to the topic; a personal reflection about the topic; a brief historical background
5. Answers will vary, but students should consider that the author takes the problem seriously, even though he uses humor to describe it.
6. Answers will vary.

Activity Three
Passage One
1. She suggests that the supersize phenomenon, in the end, won’t help restaurants sell more meals; it is a promotional gimmick that will run its course.
2. a statement of the subject’s overall significance; a useful analogy or comparison
3. Answers will vary.

Passage Two
1. Stein suggests that readers mail him his own article so they will increase the USPS’s business.
2. Stein’s suggestion is absurd, as he doesn’t need his own article returned to him. Humor is an effective attention-getting device and one Stein’s audience—a culturally and civically educated group—would appreciate. Writers should consider audience when employing humor. The use of humor would be ineffective and perhaps offensive if the audience perceived the topic as sacred or life-altering.
3. call to action; a suggestion for specific actions that the reader should take in light of the information the writer has provided
4. Answers will vary.
Introductions and Conclusions
Foundation Lesson

Introductions for argumentation essays do more than simply present the topic. Depending upon your purpose, you can use your introduction to interest your reader, pose questions, offer background information, or discuss your own interest in and connection to the topic. Some strategies for organizing introductions include using:

- a startling statement, fact, or statistic
- an anecdote
- a quotation related to the topic
- *in medias res*—beginning in the middle of the scene
- a dialogue
- a vivid scene
- a question or a problem
- a personal reflection about the topic
- a description of the topic that does not name it
- a rhetorical question
- a dramatic incident
- a contrast
- an explanation of the thesis
- a brief historical background
- an idea to be refuted

Activity One: Analyzing Introductions
Read the introduction to the *Time* magazine article “Supersize Me,” in which author Claire Suddath describes the phenomenon among fast food restaurants that supersize their menu items:

“I just ate a pizza made out of hamburgers. By that I mean that I tried Burger King’s new Pizza Burger, a 2,530-calorie monstrosity that includes four hamburger patties, pepperoni, mozzarella and something called Tuscan sauce on an enormous sesame-seed bun. The $13 megaburger is 9.5 in. (24 cm) in diameter—the size of a small pizza—and is the caloric equivalent of nearly four Whoppers. I made it through two slices before I called it quits.”

1. What is the main issue introduced by the passage? ____________________________________________

2. From what point of view is the passage written? ____________________________________________

3. Why do you think the author used this point of view? __________________________________________

4. Look at the list of introduction organizational strategies above. What strategy or strategies did the author use to introduce her essay? ________________________________
I love everything about the Postal System. I love that it’s the only service industry left in which I don’t have to tip anyone. I love that my mail carrier knows a lot of disturbing things about me on the basis of my mail and never says anything about them. I love that every day, I get to see my name in print. As much as I like e-mail, physical mail is more exciting. It’s e-mail you can injure yourself opening.

Which is why I’m panicked that the U.S. Postal Service—which has been around since 1775 and has been completely self-funded since 1971—has declared that it will likely go bankrupt in a year, after losing about 10 billion this year. “Congressional action is needed immediately to avoid this default,” said Postmaster General Patrick Donahoe at a Senate hearing in September. Nobody likes to see someone with the title Postmaster General beg for money.

Now, read the following introduction from the article “Pushing the Envelope,” written by Time columnist Joel Stein, who discusses financial problems faced by the United States Postal Service (USPS).

1. What is the main issue introduced by this passage?

2. From what point of view is the passage written?

3. Why do you think the author used this point of view?

4. Look at the list of introduction organizational strategies above. What strategy or strategies did the author use to introduce his essay?

5. What do you think the author’s attitude is about the USPS’s financial problems? Explain your answer, offering evidence from the passage to support your conclusion.

6. What do you predict the rest of the article will discuss, based on the information you see in the introduction?
Activity Two: Writing an Introduction
Imagine that your teacher has assigned you the task of writing a persuasive essay on whether individuals should eat meat. Write an introduction for this persuasive essay in which you use one or more of the strategies listed in the gray box above. Before you begin, answer the following questions:

1. What is your purpose for writing this essay?

2. What organizational strategy or strategies will you use?

3. What point of view will you use?

4. What is your position on the topic?
Activity Three: Analyzing Conclusions

The conclusion for your essay should not just summarize your essay’s main points. The conclusion offers you an opportunity to call your audience to action, to move them emotionally, or to consider the consequences of inaction. Some strategies for organizing your conclusion include using

- a call for action
- a prediction
- drawing a deduction from the facts
- a question
- a strong contrast
- a quotation that especially illustrates the main point
- a dismissal of an opposing idea
- a final illustration
- a return to the idea of structure of the beginning
- a statement of the subject’s overall significance
- a solution to a problem or a recommendation
- a useful analogy or comparison
- a suggestion for specific actions that the reader should take in light of the information the writer has provided
- a speculation about what the thesis implies for the future
- a brief remark that sums up the writer’s feelings

Read the conclusion from Claire Suddath’s article “Supersize Me” and answer the following questions:

“On the consumption side, media stunts can get a restaurant only so far. Freakishly large burgers provide amusement, maybe earn the eater some bragging rights, but in the end they offer nothing more than a hint of pizza sauce or a slight doughnut aftertaste. The foot- longs don’t even have that. After all, food can’t taste longer.”

1. What does the author seem to suggest about the value of supersized menu items?

2. What organizational strategy or strategies does the author use in her conclusion?

3. In this paragraph, the author does not call on her readers to perform a specific action or adopt a position. Write an additional sentence for this conclusion that includes a suggestion for specific actions the reader should take in light of the information provided.

Claire Suddath, “Supersize Me. An American classic grows up and out. What’s fueling the explosion of oversize novelty burgers?” Time, Oct 11, 2010. Copyright TIME INC. Reprinted by permission. TIME is a registered trademark of Time Inc. All rights reserved. Copyright © 2012 Laying the Foundation, Inc., Dallas, TX. All rights reserved. Visit: Visit us online at www.ltftraining.org.
Now, read the conclusion to Joel Stein’s article “Pushing the Envelope.” This paragraph follows a list of possible solutions to the USPS’s financial difficulties:

“But these are long range, forward-looking plans. Our friends at the post office need revenue now. So please cut out or print this column and mail it back to me.”

1. What is the author’s short-term solution to the USPS’s financial problems?

2. The author uses humor as a device to persuade his readers. What makes his call to action humorous?

   Why do you think the audience might appreciate the author’s humor?

When writing introductions or conclusions, what factors would you consider before using humor as a persuasive tool?

When would you not want to use humor?

3. What organizational strategy or strategies does the author use in his conclusion?

4. In this paragraph, the author calls on his readers to perform a specific action or adopt a position. However, he does not explain why this action is critical. Write an additional sentence for this conclusion that speculates what might happen if we don’t “print this column and mail it back.”
Activity Four: Writing a Conclusion
Write a conclusion to a persuasive essay on whether individuals should eat meat. Before you write, consider the following questions:

1. What organizational strategy will you use?__________________________________________

2. Are you going to include a suggestion for future action? Why or why not?______________

3. What tone will you use (funny, serious, angry, matter-of-fact, excited)? Explain your choice.
   ____________________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________

Activity Five: Revision Exercise
Rewrite your introduction or your conclusion using a different organizational strategy. For example, if you began your original introduction with a rhetorical question, try rewriting it to include a vivid scene or dramatic incident. Beneath your revised introduction or conclusion, state which version you find most effective and explain the reasons why you made this choice.