Writing Intros and Conclusions

Intros provide a way to connect to your paper, a context for understanding what’s to follow.

Types of Intros:

1. quotation - select a provocative or well-phrased quote introducing the thesis
2. historical review - introduce historical background on the topic to set a context for the subject
3. review of controversy - a specific type of historical review could focus on a controversy or debate
4. general to specific - work from a broader subject and narrow it down to the paper’s topic
5. specific to general - Use an anecdote (a brief story) or illustration and then move to a broader point
6. question - Begin by posing a question or series of questions
7. statement of thesis - When in doubt, the most direct and safest introduction is to begin immediately with the thesis

Conclusions provide a way to review your paper and put it in a broader context.

1. state the subject’s significance - one of the most effective: discuss the larger significance of what you’ve written. You summarize the specific topics you’ve covered in your paper, then explain their significance to a broader subject
2. call for further research - in the scientific and social science communities, papers often end with a review of what has been presented and how the subject could be further explored.
3. solution/recommendation - if your paper reviews a problem or controversy, the conclusion could offer a solution based on the knowledge presented in the paper
4. anecdote - tell a brief story or joke that sheds light on your subject. The purpose is to make your point with subtlety, so resist the temptation to interpret it. It should meet these criteria: 1) the paper should have prepared the reader to understand it; 2) it should provoke the reader's interest
5. quotation - a favorite concluding device—quoting a famous person or an authority in the field you’re writing about. It should be 1) suitable to your thesis; 2) an appropriate source that reflects the tone of the paper
6. question - Opening and closing questions function differently. Opening questions should be answered by the paper. Concluding questions leave matters unresolved and ask the reader to offer their own answers
7. speculation - This kind of question asks what might happen
8. summary - The most direct and safest conclusion. You restate the thesis of the paper and summarize some of the major steps in arriving at the conclusion. You may include a climactic or vigorous quote from one of your sources.

(From Behrens Expanded 9th edition, Chapter 3)