

Qualities of a Good Conclusion

After you have successfully written a strong introduction and two or three developmental paragraphs, it is time to bring the essay to a closure. This is what writers call a conclusion. As a general rule, any type of conclusion is better than no conclusion at all, so it is important to write a concluding statement even if it is short.

The characteristics of a good conclusion are the following:

1. It restates the thesis sentence but does not use the exact words.
2. It restates the topic sentences from the developmental paragraphs but does not use the exact words.
3. If appropriate, it states an opinion, makes a prediction, or gives a solution.
4. It concludes with a statement that sums up the essay.
5. It uses a transition word(s) of summary (i.e., in other words, in short, in summary, in conclusion, to sum up, that is, and therefore) in order to cue the reader that the ideas are coming to an end.

Read the following two essays focusing on the conclusions for each one:

Nowadays, with the invention of the microwave and with the popularity of fast food restaurants, food has become easier to prepare than ever. Do you think microwave ovens and fast food restaurants are beneficial to society? Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

One thing is for certain: we must eat. However, how we eat and in what location we eat makes all the difference in the world. The microwave and fast food restaurants do not benefit our society since they contribute to obesity, and to the destruction of the family unit.

First, microwaves and fast food restaurants can contribute to obesity in that people who use them also tend to buy microwave dinners/meals which are often high in fats and sugars. And if a person eats a lot of high fat and sugary foods, he will become fat. It seems that recently in my country, more and more people are becoming overweight.

Also, that many people eat microwave dinners and that they frequent fast food restaurants indicates they are not having the traditional family dinner where the whole family sits around the table each day, eats a good meal, and then spends time talking to each other about the day's events. So more and more families are eating dinner while watching television instead of having conversation with each other. Thus, the family unit is not as strong as it used to be. The divorce rate is up, and one main cause of that might be due to a lack of communication. This failure can in part be traced back to not eating together at the dinner table.

Therefore, since microwaves and fast food restaurants cause people to become fat and keep them from sitting around the table together as a family, it might be better if we go back to the days where a family eats together at a dinner table instead.

Although short, this conclusion is effective for the following reasons:

1. By saying “microwaves and fast food restaurants cause people to become fat and keep them from sitting around the table together as a family,” the writer has restated both the thesis and the topic sentences of the essay.
2. The writer has stated a solution to the problem of using microwaves and fast food restaurants: “it might be better if we go back to the days where a family eats together at a dinner table instead.”
3. The writer has used the transition word “therefore,” to introduce a statement that sums up the essay.

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Lastly, another problem that our society faces is watching too much television. Similar to eating out and using microwaves, this leisure activity destroys communication among members of a family and can cause them to become fat due to the sedentary lifestyle it promotes.

However well-written it might be, this conclusion is ineffective for the following reasons:

1. The writer has not restated both the thesis and the topic sentences of the essay.
2. The topic of watching television is not relevant to rest of the essay.
3. Going in an entirely new direction, the conclusion does not conclude with a statement that sums up the entire essay.