



The End – Writing the Conclusion

*Time4Writing
Mrs. Gardner,
Instructor*

Let's review...



- You've chosen your topic, done your brainstorming, and created a “working” thesis statement
- You've developed a topic outline for your essay, and you have designed an introduction
- You have even ‘built’ your ‘body’
- Now, it's time to wrap it all up with a strong conclusion

Let's review...



- We last talked about how important it is
 - to begin with a specific topic sentence
 - to use details that explain and support your topic sentence
 - to interpret the information you have presented

What is a conclusion?

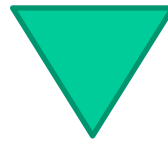


- A conclusion is what you will leave with your reader
- It “wraps up” your essay
- It demonstrates to the reader that you accomplished what you set out to do
- It shows how you have proved your thesis
- It provides the reader with a sense of closure on the topic

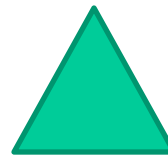
Structure



- A conclusion is the opposite of the introduction
- Remember that the introduction begins general and ends specific



- The conclusion begins specific and moves to the general



Essay Structure



- So, if we use shapes to demonstrate the essay's content, it would look like this:

- Introduction
- Thesis statement
- Body of Essay
- Rephrased thesis statement
- Conclusion

What to include



- Your conclusion wraps up your essay in a tidy package and brings it home for your reader
- Your topic sentence should summarize what you said in your thesis statement
 - This suggests to your reader that you have accomplished what you set out to accomplish
- Do not simply restate your thesis statement, as that would be redundant
 - Rephrase the thesis statement with fresh and deeper understanding

What to include



- Your conclusion is no place to bring up new ideas
- Your supporting sentences should summarize what you have already said in the body of your essay
 - If a brilliant idea tries to sneak into the final paragraph, you must pluck it out and let it have its own paragraph in the body, or leave it out completely
- Your topic for each body paragraph should be summarized in the conclusion
 - Wrap up the main points

What to include



- Your closing sentence should help the reader feel a sense of closure
- Your closing sentence is your last word on the subject; it is your “clincher”
 - Demonstrate the importance of your ideas
 - Propel your reader to a new view of the subject
 - End on a positive note
- Your closing sentence should make your readers glad they read your paper

Strategies for an effective conclusion



- Play the “So What” Game.
 - When you read a statement from the conclusion, ask yourself, “So what?” or “Why should anybody care?”
 - Ponder that question and answer it
 - Basically, I’m just saying that education was important to Douglass
 - So what?
 - Well, it was important because it was a key to him feeling like a free and equal citizen
 - Why should anybody care?
 - That’s important because plantation owners tried to keep slaves from being educated so that they could maintain control. When Douglass obtained an education, he undermined that control personally.

Strategies for an effective conclusion



- Return to the theme or themes in the introduction
 - This brings the reader full circle
 - If you begin by describing a scenario, you can end with the same scenario as proof that your essay is helpful in creating a new understanding
 - Refer to the introductory paragraph by using key words, or parallel concepts and images that you also used in the introduction

Strategies for an effective conclusion



- Summarize
 - Include a brief summary of the paper's main points, but don't simply repeat things that were in the paper
- Pull it all together
 - Show your reader how the points you made and the support and examples you used fit together

Strategies for an effective conclusion



- Include a provocative insight or quotation from the research or reading you did for the paper
- Propose a course of action, a solution to an issue, or questions for further study
- Point to broader implications
 - A paper about the style of writer, Virginia Woolf, could point to her influence on other writers or later feminists

Concluding strategies that do not work



- Beginning with an unnecessary, overused phrase
- These may work in speeches, but they come across as wooden and trite in writing
 - “in conclusion”
 - “in summary”
 - “in closing”
 - “as shown in the essay”

Concluding strategies that do not work



- Stating the thesis for the very first time
- Introducing a new idea or subtopic in your conclusion
- Making sentimental, emotional appeals that are out of character with the rest of the paper
- Including evidence (quotations, statistics, etc.) that should be in the body of the paper

Ineffective conclusions



- “That’s My Story and I’m Sticking to It”
 - Restates the thesis and is usually painfully short
 - Does not push ideas forward
 - Written when the writer can’t think of anything else to say
 - Example
 - In conclusion, Frederick Douglass was, as we have seen, a pioneer in American education, proving that education was a major force for social change with regard to slavery.

Ineffective conclusions



- “Sherlock Holmes”
 - State the thesis for the first time in the conclusion
 - Writer thinks it would be more dramatic to keep the reader in suspense and then “wow” them with the main idea, as in a Sherlock Holmes mystery
 - Readers want an analytical discussion of the topic in academic style, with the thesis statement up front

Ineffective conclusions



- “America the Beautiful/”
 - Draws on emotion to make its appeal
 - Out of character with the rest of the paper
- “Grab Bag”
 - Includes extra information thought of or found but couldn’t integrate into the main body
 - Creates confusion for the reader

Conclusion outline



- Topic sentence
 - Fresh rephrasing of thesis statement
- Supporting sentences
 - Summarize or wrap up the main points in the body of the essay
 - Explain how ideas fit together
- Closing sentence
 - Final words
 - Connects back to the introduction
 - Provides a sense of closure

An Adventure!



- Are you ready to get started?
- Click on the “The Hazards of Moviegoing” link and get ready to set sail!
- If you need help, please send me a message via the “Send Mrs. Gardner a message” link
- Be sure to review and even print out the resources in the top block of the Home Page
- Information adapted from:
<http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/composition/endings.htm> and
<http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/conclusions.html>