



Writing an Effective Conclusion

What is a Conclusion?

A conclusion is the final paragraph/section of an essay, and it plays an important role in writing an effective paper. The conclusion allows the writer to conclude the essay by summarizing and synthesizing its main points, by reiterating the thesis, and by providing final thoughts about the significance of the essay's topic. An effective conclusion will typically begin by discussing the specific ideas presented in the body of the essay and then transition into a general discussion of the larger, universal significance of the essay's subject matter.

What should a conclusion do?

- Provide a general summary of the essay's main points.
- Synthesize the essay's main points, showing how they are all related to one another, and how, together, they support the essay's thesis.
- Restate the thesis, reminding the reader of the essay's main idea/argument and what the author's purpose was for writing it.
- Show the importance of the essay's topic by reflecting on its significance and how it affects readers, other individuals, society, the world, etc. An effective conclusion will answer the "so what?" question for readers, leaving them with a clear idea of what the essay was about and why it matters.
- Provide readers with closure by stating any final thoughts about the subject (notes of significance, potential areas of future inquiry, a call for action, etc.).

Parts of a Conclusion

- **Summary:** The summary portion of the conclusion presents a brief overview of the essay. This reminds readers about the writer's main points and any other important ideas that were presented in the body of the essay.
- **Synthesis:** The synthesis portion of the conclusion shows how all of the main ideas presented in the body of the essay are interconnected. It explains how they fit together to form cohesive support for the thesis.
- **Restated Thesis:** The thesis should be restated in a new way in the conclusion. This reminds reader's what the writer's main idea/argument was and why they wrote the essay. For more on thesis statements, see our handout Writing an Effective Thesis Statement.

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- **Significance:** End by discussing the larger significance of the essay's subject, and try to draw a final conclusion about the topic. Explain why it matters (for individuals, society, the world, etc.). Attempt to leave readers with the big picture understanding of your topic and how it fits into the larger scheme of things. For personal essays, the conclusion is a great place to reflect on the personal significance of the essay's topic and to discuss the importance that it holds for the author.

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