

## Conclusions

A conclusion completes the essay a logical and polished way. An essay that comes to a logical end, by bringing together and reinforcing the ideas that were previously explained, increases the overall strength of an argument. The conclusion is the final chance to tie together the various parts of the discussion and cement the argument in the reader's mind.

There are at least three considerations when writing an effective conclusion:

- Include a summary
- Include an explanation of significance
- Avoid common errors

### Summary

A conclusion should summarize the parts of an essay to help the reader refocus. Therefore, the argument and main points must be restated. Restating the argument is important because the conclusion should leave the reader with no question as to what was proven. The conclusion also needs to summarize the main points to refresh the reader's mind as to how an argument was proven. However, avoid extensive detail on the subtopics and arguments covered in the essay; instead, simply state the main points that were used to prove the thesis statement in order to remind the reader of how the argument and the evidence work together.

### Significance

A conclusion should not only provide a summary of the thesis and main point, it also needs to bring the argument into a larger context by including a “so what?” explanation. In other words, the reader needs to be left with an understanding of why the paper is significant. However, there are some general issues that can be addressed in a conclusion:

- Future research
- Course of action
- Overall Importance

#### Future research

Explain where the research ends and where the rest of the subject lies. For example, one may indicate that there is a need for further research in a particular area.

Include a statement that looks ahead to the future. In other words, what are the potential implications, consequences, or applications of the suggestions or arguments that were made?

#### Course of action

Depending on the topic, it may be useful to recommend a course of action.

#### Importance

Consider why the argument is important. This does not mean coming up with ideas that will change the entire way that research in a particular subject area is conducted; however, if there is no significance to the argument, then there is no reason to write it. The argument may provide a new interpretation of a text, or may be critiquing someone else's argument, or suggesting a way that a particular theory applies to a

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specific situation, etc. Whatever the subject, there should be an overall reason for writing it. This can be stated in the conclusion.

The conclusion should explain why the reader should care about what is being written.

### Problems to avoid in conclusions

Some common problems to avoid include the following:

- Introducing new ideas or facts
- Simply rewording the introduction
- Including irrelevant stories or facts
- Making absolute claims
- Not qualifying statements
- Drawing unreasonable conclusions
- Not portraying confidence

#### Avoid introducing new ideas or facts

Any pertinent ideas should be included in the body of an essay. Introducing new ideas in this section can confuse the reader. The reader is expecting the writer to have made all his or her points that support the argument in the body of the paper.

#### Avoid rewording the introduction

A concluding paragraph cannot simply restate an introduction or the main points. It needs to logically tie together the argument, the evidence, and the analysis discussed throughout the paper. A conclusion works to confirm and show the significance of the writer's claim.

#### Avoid making absolute claims

Avoid absolute claims, which are claims that do not allow for exceptions or interpretation. Academic writing is reasonable and objective, and allows for other interpretations, facts, or exceptions.

#### Avoid leaving statements unqualified

It is generally better to qualify statements made in an essay. This connects the argument to the evidence in a logical and reasonable way. These statements allow one to make a point without alienating the reader, making a leap of judgment, or making an incorrect claim.

#### Avoid drawing unreasonable conclusions

Do not conclude more than what can be reasonably claimed from the evidence presented. For instance, if the essay deals with pine trees in British Columbia that are being ravaged by pine beetles, then one cannot reasonably conclude that all of Canada's pine trees are at risk. Therefore, it is important to make the argument fit the evidence, and state the significance of the ideas appropriately.