

Organization Conclusions

Your conclusion is vital to your paper's success. Not only does it create the last impression readers will take with them, but it is the final opportunity for you to re-emphasize the central idea and main points of your paper. It should leave your readers with a sense of closure.

TIPS FOR WRITING EFFECTIVE CONCLUSIONS

STRESS THE IMPORTANCE OF YOUR MAIN IDEA

Your conclusion should return to the thesis statement—presenting the same idea that was emphasized in the introduction—but using different words.

EXPLAIN THE OVERALL SIGNIFICANCE OF YOUR PAPER

Leave your readers with a clear understanding of your paper's overall importance. Your conclusion is an excellent opportunity to emphasize the answer to the question, "So what?" about your paper. Why does this topic matter? What significance does it have beyond this particular paper?

GIVE THE PAPER A SENSE OF COMPLETION

A successful conclusion reviews how all of your ideas fit together and gives readers a sense of closure. Nevertheless, do not wait for your conclusion to show how your ideas are related to each other. Your conclusion should finalize your ideas and their relationships—not introduce new ones.

ACHIEVE A BALANCE

As with your introduction, your conclusion may be one to several paragraphs long. Its length should vary in proportion to the length of your paper.

CONSIDER USING ONE OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING OPTIONS:

- ◄ **Statement of significance**—After asking and answering various questions regarding the topic, tell your readers why these answers matter. This type of conclusion demonstrates how the thesis statement relates to bigger issues.
- ◄ **Solution or recommendation**—If your essay discusses a problem or controversy, explain steps that will resolve this controversy or fix the problem.
- ◄ **Call for further research**—After exploring the topic, you may find that you do not have enough information to make a final statement about your subject. If this happens, offer detailed suggestions for further investigation on the matter.
- ◄ **Speculation**—In some essays, you may not be able to provide definite answers, yet you may still hope to provide some sense of resolution by offering a plausible solution to the paper's main issue. When doing so, stay close to the information in the rest of your paper.
- ◄ **A call to action**—If appropriate, invite readers to actively respond to the information presented.
- ◄ **Tie-back to the introduction**—Add a sense of completion by referring to an element of your introduction. For example, if you began with a story, refer to that story in the conclusion.

AVOID . . .

- ◄ Becoming "preachy."
- ◄ Becoming overly emotional or melodramatic (especially in an intellectual paper).
- ◄ Introducing new information or a new topic.
- ◄ Simply mirroring your introduction.
- ◄ Just restating what you have already written.

*NOTE: The general suggestions listed above are most appropriate for a general essay. Because no two papers are alike, you should always tailor your conclusion to the specific purpose and audience of your paper.