Writing Your Conclusion

Your concluding paragraph should provide the reader an overview of the main ideas you discussed, but might also offer solutions, suggest next steps or present new questions. You should refer back to your thesis, but don’t simply restate it; make connections for the reader.

IDENTIFY THE PURPOSE OF YOUR PAPER

What was the purpose of your paper? Your conclusion should make the purpose clear. If you are not sure what you want the reader to “get” from your paper, try asking some of the following questions:

- Did you propose any solutions? Are there solutions yet to be discovered?
- What questions still need to be answered?
- What is the larger significance of the topic you chose to write about?
- What should the reader do or think after reading your paper?
- Is there a “moral” or lesson the reader should have learned?

Write the purpose of your paper here:

CHOOSE A METHOD FOR CONCLUDING

Read the following options for concluding your paper. Check those that seem most appropriate and relevant, based on your purpose and what type of essay you are writing, and try out a few. You may find that a combination of methods works best.

- Challenge the reader to act
- Identify the significance of your topic to issues in the “real world”
- Persuade the reader to think or believe something
- End with a relevant quotation that reflects your main ideas
- Suggest solutions or changes for the future
- If the issue you wrote about has been resolved, explain the solution to the reader
- Offer an opinion or prediction
- Ask a rhetorical question that encourages the reader to keep thinking about your topic
- Conclude with a personal connection or story, or a final example
- Offer a “moral” or a lesson the reader should have learned

Conclusion “Don’ts”:

- Avoid only restating your thesis, or “saying what you’ve already said”
- Avoid only listing or summarizing the main ideas of each paragraph, without making connections or suggestions
- Avoid introducing a new idea or topic
- Avoid stating the obvious, or writing “In this paper I have shown…” or “In conclusion…”