Conclusions

A conclusion often sums up the major ideas of your paper, giving readers closure. When done well, a conclusion reminds readers of your primary points, and pushes your ideas a bit further . This causes readers to think about the larger meaning of your central argument. If your introduction and body paragraphs are strong, but your conclusion is weak, readers will come away feeling let down. Thus, your conclusion should help readers take something away from your topic, or even see it in a new light.



Have you reached the end of your essay, with nothing left to say? Do you already have a conclusion—but it needs revision? If you're struggling to craft a conclusion, or you want to revise an existing one, it might help to experiment with different strategies for ending your paper. Before you conclude your essay by just stopping or repeating what you've already said, try some of these other techniques forclosing out an essay.

SOME STRATEGIES FOR ENDING AN ESSAY:

PLAY THE "SO WHAT" GAME: If you can answer the question "What was the point of this essay?" within the confines of your conclusion, you do yourself and your reader a valuable service.

SYNTHESIZE, RATHER THAN SUMMARIZE: Pull your ideas together without repeating yourself word for word. Explain how your various ideas fit together into a larger whole.

PROPOSE A FURTHER COURSE OF ACTION: Now that you have proven your point, how can the reader implement your ideas into his/her own life?

CLOSE THE CIRCLE: A way to impart a sense of unity to an essay is to return at the end to a significant quotation, image, scenario, or statement that was introduced earlier in the essay. Done well, closing the circle will effectively wrap up your essay, often conveying a clear sense of order and completeness. Let's say you began your essay with two teens sitting next to each other, while at the same time texting each other. To close the circle in your conclusion then, you could come back to this scenario, developing it into a larger point about the growing lack of face-to-face communication and socialization.

CHALLENGE THE READER: If your essay deals with some pressing issue or problem, you might want to end with a call to action or direct challenge to the reader. How can the reader improve, solve, or put a stop to the problem? In what way should the reader rethink, reconsider, or view the issue? What can the reader do to affect change?

MAKE A PREDICTION: If your essay examines the growing use of texting, for instance, you might close the essay by predicting the possibilities or pitfalls of the technology. What impact will you're your topic have on the community, on society, on the world at large?

POSE A QUESTION or PRESENT A STRIKING EXAMPLE: Posing a question, either to the reader or in general, may provide a new perspective on your essay topic. You can also give readers a sense of closure by ending with a powerful example that illustrates the main thrust, argument or point of your essay. Either strategy can hammer home your argument.

SOME ENDINGS *TO AVOID*

THE MIRROR IMAGE:
This ending restates the thesis and summarizes the main points without pushing any new ideas.

THE WASTE BASKET:
In this ending, the writer throws in extra stuff that he or she thought of, but couldn't integrate into the main paper.

THE EMPTY CLICHÉ:
"And that's why I believe laughter is the best medicine."

THE DEADLY OBVIOUS:
"Now that you've read my essay, you should clearly understand the points I'm making."

THE APOLOGY:
In this ending, the writer just apologizes for the poor quality of his or her paper: "Although some readers might be bored reading about my experiences, they mean a lot to me."

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