

Conclusions

What to consider in your conclusion

Your conclusion is your chance to have the last word on the subject. Just as it is important to make a good first impression, it is also important to make a good final impression.

Your conclusion can go beyond the confines of the assignment. Essentially, your conclusion can help answer the question, "So what?"

Your conclusion should make your readers glad they read your paper. Your conclusion gives your reader something to take away that will help them see things differently or appreciate your topic in personally relevant ways.

How to Evaluate Your Conclusion

Restate the thesis: read your introduction and your conclusion side by side. If they say essentially the same thing, you probably need to rethink your conclusion and rework your language.

Use logic: for an argument paper or a comparison and contrast paper, pointing out the logical strengths and weakness of one or both sides might work well.

Question: close with a real or rhetorical question. This can guide the reader to drawing his/her own conclusions.

Speculation or opinion: this is an option if the writer can't come up with a clear decision or direction about what they were researching.

Recommendation: suggest that the reader take some kind of action.

Quotation: as with introductions, a quotation is a strong and memorable way to close a paper.

Things NOT to do in a conclusion

"That's My Story and I'm Sticking To It": This conclusion just restates the thesis and is usually painfully short. It does not push the ideas forward in any way. People write this kind of conclusion when they just can't think of anything else to say.

"Sherlock Holmes": Sometimes, instead of reworking the thesis in the conclusion, writers will state the thesis for the very first time in the conclusion. This can be very successful, but make sure that's what you want to do when you start writing.

"America the Beautiful"/"I Am Woman"/"We Shall Overcome"

Conclusion: This kind of conclusion usually draws on emotion to make its appeal. A more fitting tribute to the individual, theme, historical event, or other topic would certainly be a more sophisticated commentary than just emotional praise.

The Grab Bag Conclusion: In this kind of conclusion, the writer throws extra stuff that he or she found or thought of, but couldn't integrate into the main paper.