

## How To Write A Conclusion

Essentially, a conclusion will encompass all the main points of the essay. It should bring the argument to a close, but also indicate why your thesis and the points you raised are important in a broader context.

### Strategies:

- BRIEFLY summarize your points: Look at all the topic sentences of the preceding paragraphs. These topic sentences will include all the main points of the essay. Your conclusion will include information about these topic sentences.
  - a. Do **NOT** copy/paste anything from the preceding paragraphs and put it into the conclusion. Even though you are addressing points already expanded on in your essay, you should *reword* these points in the conclusion and in a concise manner. However, repeating key words is OK.
  - b. You do not need evidence for your points in the conclusion since it was already included in the essay. Simply write out your points.
- Try to synthesize your points rather than just summarize: a great conclusion synthesizes the body paragraph information and puts it in relation to the thesis and/or broader implications. Some ways to start synthesizing are to think:
  - a. Why did I pick these points?
  - b. How do they fit together?
  - c. How do they, together, help the reader learn something new?
- Play the “so what?” game: Why should a reader care about your topic? This game is a way to unearth the broader/deeper implications of your essay. Start with your topic and go deeper as you keep asking “so what?”
  - a. Eg: There were anti-German films in the USA during World War I
  - b. So what?
  - c. They told average Americans that evil German immigrants would kill America from within
  - d. So what?
  - e. The films encouraged anti-German violence against immigrants
  - f. So what?
  - g. The films and violence comment on immigration in America and ways popular media can influence anti-immigrant actions. This is a trend seen in multiple time periods.
- Propose a course of action/further research topics based on your findings. Now that we know your information, where can we go from here? Consider who your “we” includes.
  - a. Keep in mind for “Defining a Concept” essay prompts that your professor may want you to stay away from directly proposing a solution

- Identify broader implications of your essay topic: “zoom out” your lens. Here are some examples:

Original (too specific)	Revision (addresses broader implications)
Cinderella is an important fairy tale for all children to read since the protagonist is a strong woman.	Fairy tales prepare children for problems they will have to face in the future since they concern topics like love and betrayal.
People need to utilize public transportation more.	Because of the previous arguments, I argue that climate change is an issue that must be immediately addressed.

What Not to Do:

- You should **NOT** restate the thesis word for word in the conclusion.
- You should usually\* **NOT** state your thesis for the first time in the conclusion. Move it to the intro, and make sure to consider it throughout your body paragraphs.
  - \*Note: there are some instances where a thesis is implied and stated more clearly at the end of the paper. Unless your professor indicates they want you to use the implied thesis, your thesis will usually be found earlier in the paper.
- Try to avoid the phrases “in conclusion,” “to conclude,” “in summary,” “to sum up,” etc. Although they are not grammatically incorrect, your reader will have likely read these phrases many times before on many different papers. Using a different opening line can make your paper sound fresh and interesting.
- Refrain from excess summary, especially in papers less than 10 pages long.
- While it is alright to suggest ideas for further research in the conclusion, new ideas should be limited in this paragraph. The conclusion should be based on the argument(s) you have already made in the body paragraphs; therefore, you should not have to spend your time extensively explaining or providing further evidence for body paragraph points in your conclusion.
- Normally, the conclusion will not contain quotes from outside sources.

**Additional Resources:**

The Writing Center at the UNC Chapel Hill: [www.writingcenter.unc.edu/tips-and-tools/conclusions/](http://www.writingcenter.unc.edu/tips-and-tools/conclusions/)