

CONCLUSIONS

Conclusions can be challenging to write. The conclusion is your last chance to convince your reader about the validity of your argument or ideas you have presented, and also provides your paper with a sense of closure – while keeping open the possibility of further research or conversation on your topic.

As you approach the end of your essay, you may want to keep in mind these questions to guide you towards writing an interesting and effective conclusion:

- What is the main idea from your essay you would like your reader to understand and why?
- What would be the most concise yet engaging way to reemphasize the thesis of your paper?
- What are the implications of your argument?

Conclusions for Shorter Essays (usually fewer than 10 pages)

In shorter papers your conclusion is usually just one paragraph. To avoid a conclusion that is redundant and perhaps boring to readers, try these strategies for concluding shorter essays:

- **End with an illustration or anecdote** that illustrates your thesis or ties the conclusion to the introduction by completing an image or anecdote with which you began the paper. For example, if you introduce the topic of your paper with a significant quote or definition, you might return to this again at the end of the paper to remind readers of why it is important.
- **Offer a possible solution** if your argument has identified and discussed a problem. In fact, if your argument focuses on identifying a problem, you almost owe it to your readers to suggest possibilities for resolving it. Or your conclusion might give "warnings" about possible solutions or drawbacks of solutions.
- **Indicate a preference or final conclusive point** if your argument has compared two or more things. In this type of conclusion, you might review various alternatives, rejecting some and concluding with what you think is the most appropriate and why.
- **Predict an outcome** if your argument has focused on a situation as yet unresolved or a question unanswered by your selected texts. Be sure to ground your speculation in the probable rather than the imaginary or fanciful, otherwise your prediction will be unconvincing.
- **Revisit your thesis but don't repeat it.** The conclusion can be a place to further extend the "so what" question you attempt to resolve with your argument throughout the paper. In your conclusion, you might help readers understand more fully the implications and importance of the central claim of your essay.

Conclusions for Longer Essays (10 or more pages)

In longer essays (10-15 pages or more) or more complex essays you may need to restate the various claims of your paper to remind readers of how the argument has been developed. In longer papers, your conclusion may be more than one paragraph. The above strategies can also be effective in writing longer conclusions, in addition to the tips below:

- **Build your conclusion around the same elements of your introduction in reverse order.** Start by restarting your main claim or argument and then review the context that led you to this argument.
- **Rephrase the language of your main claim or thesis** from the introduction in light of the argument you present in your paper.
- **Remind readers of the significance of your claim** or argument. Depending on the length of your essay, you may need to provide a brief summary of what have argued or proposed. Avoid boring the reader though by creating a "list summary": a list of each point you have covered in every paragraph.
- **Revisit a main concept or term from your essay and redefine it** by showing how your argument offers a new take or perspective.