

Writing a Conclusion

When writing most papers, you include an introductory paragraph, the main body paragraphs, and the conclusory paragraph. The conclusion can be intimidating because it is your last word on your topic. It's the last paragraph of a paper you've written! You want to leave readers with something impactful. The conclusion is also used to wrap up your paper. Without a conclusion, your paper will seem unfinished, like a story without the "happily ever after." Having a strong conclusion will bolster your paper's purpose while giving readers a satisfying ending.

Four Goals of a Conclusion

1. **Emphasizing the thesis:** Revise and rephrase your thesis in a new way or restate your purpose with a nuanced change of context. Spark your readers to think about it in a new way! This refreshes the reader's memory about your main point and allows you to show that you've proven or demonstrated your thesis over the course of your paper. Many writers choose to restate their thesis for the first sentence of their conclusory paragraph.
2. **Synthesizing your argument:** Synthesize, don't summarize. You do not need to recap your entire paper point by point. Instead, present your main points as a coherent whole that fit together to support your purpose.
3. **Answering "So what?" or "Now what?":** Why should readers care about your argument? What does your paper add to the discussion about your topic? Where should readers go from here? This is your opportunity to elaborate on the significance of your findings, suggest larger implications now that you've presented your evidence, and propose a course of action or questions for future study.
4. **Providing closure:** You can provide closure and make a clever exit by leaving the reader with a strong closing statement. This can be tricky because, depending on the paper, this will be the only piece of personal input you might have. In an informative essay, your closing statement will be your only personal input on the subject, most likely what you feel about the subject. In an argumentative essay, it will be your input as to why your side of the argument should win. You want to leave your readers thinking!

Inductive Organization

The reason writers often choose to restate their thesis for the first sentence of their conclusion is because, generally speaking, conclusions have an inductive organization. That is, they start with a very specific statement and then move to broader ideas, such as a synthesis of the paper's main points and/or broader considerations about the topic.

Example of a Conclusion With an Inductive Organization

[restates thesis/main point] Great Britain's mercantile spirit created a cycle of trade, population growth, and industrialism that led Great Britain to become a great empire. [synthesizes argument] Through its expanse in trade, this little country was able to establish multiple routes, allowing it to gain a huge amounts of wealth. This prosperity led to an influx of immigrants and resulted in an explosion in population that expanded the workforce, caused more colonies to be created, and brought increased resources. From these new resources sprang industrialism, giving rise to new technology and mechanization. Industrialism allowed Great Britain to produce better goods that could be traded with far-off nations, which netted the country even more power. [provides closure] This cycle was what made Great Britain virtually the ruler of the colonial world.

