

Conclusion Paragraphs

1. **What makes an effective conclusion paragraph?**
 - According to *The Scott Foresman Handbook for Writers, 7th ed.*, concluding paragraph should “wind up your paper in a way that makes readers feel that you have tied up loose ends—that you have fulfilled the commitment you made in the opening paragraph” (251).
 - In other words, your conclusion should explain that you have made all the points your thesis set out to argue/prove/state.

2. **What are some strategies for writing conclusions?**
 - **Summarize the main points you have made:** Restating your thesis is one way of summarizing your main ideas. Think about not just repeating word-for-word your thesis statement from the introduction but reemphasizing your main points as one last attempt to persuade the audience to support your argument.
 - **Make a recommendation when one is appropriate:** A recommendation should stem from the issue discussed in your essay, and it should tie into each of your main ideas. One might view a recommendation as a call for action too.
 - **Link the end to the beginning:** If you begin with a narrative, you might want to consider tying that narrative into your conclusion as well. Some students use statistics or questions in their introductions, and refer to them again in the conclusion.
 - **Place your argument in a larger context:** Most times when readers reach the conclusion, they want to know how the information presented relates larger issues or their lives. By connections to the relevance of your essay to others studying your topic or the community (or the state, the nation, or the world), you are showing your reader that something is at stake in your topic.

3. **Tips for conclusions:**
 - Don’t introduce new points or arguments in your concluding paragraph. If you do so, your essay will feel unfinished to your readers, which not a good thing. If you think of a new point that is worthy to include, dedicate a body paragraph to the point.
 - Stop when you are finished. Most writers overwrite their conclusions. As writer Sherri Wahrer says, “Re-state your thesis, re-visit your paper’s main points, incorporate one last example or scenario if appropriate, and let that be the end of it.”

Adapted July, 2011 from A. Maguire by Aaron Kruse