

## Finishing Strong: Writing an Outstanding Conclusion

With a thesis that has been well argued, relevant background information given, and a clear demonstration of evidence to support your main points, the reader should see your findings as logical. Now there is nothing left to do but write the ending! The conclusion of any paper is meant to leave your reader with a definite understanding of the topic and maybe a new way of looking at the situation or a new understanding of why your argument is important.

What does your conclusion need to have?

1. Your main points should be restated. This is not a word-for-word restating, but a concise retelling of the main points and their arguments/supporting evidence. You want to wrap-up everything for the reader by showing them what they have learned, and why your arguments/supporting evidence leads to your outcome.
2. Tell your readers exactly why your paper is important. In the next sections we will get you thinking about this with some questions.
3. Optional: Finally, if you feel you need a little more, you can mention any limitations or future direction of your topic. Are there areas that needed/could be expanded in future discussions? Do you have suggestions for more research that needs to be done?
4. Optional: Bring it full circle. Depending on the paper, linking back to the introduction can add a nice touch and make your paper feel complete. If you started your paper with a hook such as a question, anecdote, prediction, or figure of speech (see *Introductions* handout), try tying your final sentences back to that hook.

Let's write down some ideas!

1. Think about your main points:
  - a. Body Paragraph Main Topic: \_\_\_\_\_
    - i. Supporting Idea 1: \_\_\_\_\_
    - ii. Supporting Idea 2: \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Body Paragraph Main Topic: \_\_\_\_\_
    - i. Supporting Idea 1: \_\_\_\_\_
    - ii. Supporting Idea 2: \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. Body Paragraph Main Topic: \_\_\_\_\_
    - i. Supporting Idea 1: \_\_\_\_\_
    - ii. Supporting Idea 2: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Significance/Application: Think about the following questions:
  - a. Why is this argument important?
  - b. What would happen if nothing changes?
  - c. What would happen if things change?
  - d. What can we learn from this?
  - e. Does this relate to things that are happening today/happened in the past?

3. Thinking about these questions, pick a few and write some ideas about them:

- i. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- ii. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- iii. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- iv. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Now it's your turn! Turn your ideas into a rough draft in the box below.

Key Reminders:

- ❖ Your Conclusion should not include new information. All the main points and their arguments should have been taken care of in the body paragraphs.
- ❖ Always double check the assignment (and bring it with you to CLAS)! The prompt may give you specific instructions or suggestions on how to end your paper.
- ❖ Always consider the context of the assignment (what set of skills/knowledge is your instructor looking for?) to guide the content and structure of your paper. Visit CLAS for help with assignment analysis.