

Writing a Conclusion

Conclusions wrap up your paper with a cohesive bow. By the time you get to your conclusion your thesis should be argued to the best of your ability. It is not a body paragraph, so don't add another point to argue. A conclusion has two main elements: the *restated thesis* and the *significance or application*.

Restate the Thesis

Don't just reword the thesis. Now that they have read your entire paper, your readers will benefit from a more developed summary of your argument that reminds them of your main point. Restate, but also expand on, your thesis.

Your restated thesis: _____

Significance/Application

Now that you've reminded them of your thesis, tell your readers why they should care about your topic and argument. Your paper doesn't stand alone; it's part of a larger dialogue, so end with something that will promote further discussion. Ask yourself

- Why is this important?
- What would happen if nothing changed?
- What would happen if things changed?
- Do we need more research? What else do we need to know?
- What can we learn from this?
- Does this relate to things that are happening today/happened in the past?
- What should we do?
- Does this relate to other class concepts or other disciplines?

The significance/application of your argument: _____

Other suggestions

Bring it full circle: Depending on the paper, this 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.

Double check the assignment: 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 your instructor is looking for) to guide the content and structure of your paper. (See the CLAS Assignment Analysis handout for more help with this.)