



The Writing Center

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO
DENVER | ANSCHUTZ MEDICAL CAMPUS

Conclusions

While writers use introductions to insert their voices into academic conversations, they use conclusions to reinforce the importance of their contribution to that conversation. Conclusions move readers from the specific main points of the body paragraphs to a broader analysis of why the information provided is important. To do so, an academic conclusion typically does one or more of the following:

1. Restates the Thesis

The conclusion may contain the most complex and evolved version of the thesis statement, not just a word-for-word from the introduction. Now that readers have been given all of the supporting claims and evidence, they are better prepared for—and anticipating—the strongest assertion of the main argument.

2. Synthesizes the Main Points

Rather than simply summarizing, writers show how the claims, evidence, and analysis used in the essay logically relate to and build off of each other to answer the question, “So what?” Synthesizing these elements of the argument helps readers follow the progression of ideas and reinforces how those ideas come together to ultimately contribute something important to the conversation.

3. Extends the Conversation

To further prove the importance of their contribution to the conversation, writers may also discuss the future implications of that contribution—in effect, showing how the conversation can continue. If an introduction moves from broad to specific (inverted pyramid), then the conclusion moves from specific to broad. Depending on the type of argument made, one of the following approaches may be used to extend the conversation:

- Call for More Research/Consideration: best for arguments that prove a problem exists or that define a problem.
 - Emphasizes the need for more work, additional research, or new ideas/theories that may further define the problem or investigate the value of the issue.
- Call to Action: best for arguments that evaluate a problem or situation.
 - Directly addresses an interested audience and compels them to take action to remedy or change the problem or situation at hand.
- Hypothesize Results/Consequences: best for proposal or policy arguments.
 - Predicts success, disaster or other potential outcome if the proposed action is or isn't taken.

While a strong conclusion may do any or all of the above, there are several common conclusion techniques that should be avoided.

1. New Supporting Points or Evidence

While extending the conversation provides a valid conclusion, this should not be confused with simply adding new claims or evidence. All claims and evidence should be found only in the body of the essay. Writers should be done making their argument by the time they reach the conclusion.

2. Cliché Phrases:

Overused transitions such as “In conclusion...” or “At the end of the day...” are redundant and not appropriate for academic conclusions. Since this is the final section of the paper, the reader already understands it to be the conclusion, and overtly stating this information is unnecessary.

For further information on related concepts, please see the following handouts:

- Introductions
- Paragraph Development