

# CONCLUSIONS

## HOW TO END YOUR PAPER WITH FINESSE

A good conclusion strengthens your argument, reminds the reader of key points, and effectively pulls together the entire essay. Think of the conclusion as your way of releasing your readers back into the world. What will they take with them? With what thoughts will you leave them?

### Types of Conclusions

Try not to think of your conclusion as a mere “ending”; rather, choose a strategy for your conclusion, an intentional way of wrapping up your argument.

A conclusion can:

**Remind** the reader of your thesis or **summarize** the essay. Use this technique if you want to:

- remind the reader of the information presented in the body
- wrap up a complex argument

Be sure not to simply quote what you've already written. Instead, succinctly remind the reader how the points of evidence specifically support your thesis.

**Elaborate** the thesis. Use this technique in order to:

- take the reader one step further, adding a new perspective to your argument
- reveal additional insight into your thesis and/or points of evidence
- apply your argument to a broader context. For example, a conclusion might suggest how your analysis of surrealism would apply to contemporary western art in general.

Discuss the **implications** of the thesis. Use this technique:

- to explore how further research might expand your argument
- to discuss how your thesis fills in gaps an area of academic study, or how your thesis supports or refutes one side of an academic debate.

In other words, this kind of conclusion creates opportunities for further research instead of having the final word on the topic.

### Guidelines

Keep the conclusion **consistent**.

Follow the tone and style of the previous paragraphs: avoid contradicting other points you make, and stay on the topic of your essay.

Keep the conclusion **simple**.

State your points briefly. This is not the time to elaborate each sentence or go into great detail. Also, be sure not to use any new support evidence in your conclusion.

Keep the conclusion **specific**.

Even when discussing implications or expanding your thesis, stay within the boundaries of your topic, your research, and your argument. Be sure to avoid cliché ("Therefore, *Romeo and Juliet* proves that love conquers all").

### Bibliography

In creating this handout, we consulted and/or modified information from the following sources:

<http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/composition/endings.htm>

<http://writing2.richmond.edu/writing/wweb/conclude.html>