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Writing a Good Concluding Paragraph

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What does the conclusion do?

1. it summarizes the essay
2. it shows you proved the point you set out to make
3. it gives the reader a sense of completion
4. it leaves the reader remembering your main point

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Wait, that sounds kind of like the introduction!

So, what is the difference between
the **introductory** paragraph & the **concluding** paragraph?

The difference is in the approach to the topic.

Think of these two paragraphs as funnels, one leading toward the body of your essay, while the other leads the reader away from the body.

- The **introduction** begins with a general approach to the topic and then moves toward the more specific aspect(s) of it
- The **conclusion** begins with the more specific aspect(s) and moves toward the general topic of your essay

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What main point did you want to make in your essay?

- Did you make that point?
- Summarize it in your conclusion.
- Often you can use the introductory paragraph as a guide. This will hep you come full circle and give your reader a sense of completion.

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Perhaps you began your essay by saying:

"There are three classes at school that I absolutely can't wait to go to every day."

Then you might make this the first sentence of your conclusion:

"Gym, Math, and Art are the three classes I look forward to the most."

Do you see how the first is more general and the last is more specific?

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Other Ways to Summarize the Essay's Main Points:

- Refer briefly to the topic of each paragraph you wrote.
- Leave readers with something to think about.
- Suggest something readers can do about what they've just read.

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How to Structure the Final Paragraph

1. **Topic sentence:** repeat the ideas in your thesis statement, but with deeper understanding

2. **Supporting sentences**: summarize the main points in the body of your essay

3. **Closing sentence**: connect back to the introduction to "clinch" the ideas in the essay, showing their importance

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What if a new idea tries to sneak into that final paragraph?

If it's really important, give it a paragraph of its own in the body of the essay.

The concluding paragraph is not the place to introduce new information or make more points about the topic.

The "So What?" Tip for Writing an Effective Conclusion

After writing your topic sentence, ask yourself:
"**So what?** Why is that important?"

Your next sentence should explain why.
Then ask yourself again:
"**So what?** Why is *that* important?"

And so on.

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Example of the "So What?" Method of Starting the Concluding Paragraph:

"Education is very important in society."

"**So what?** Why is it important?"

"It gives all citizens an equal start."

"**So what?** Why is *that* important?"

Can you write an answer?

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Strategies for Ending the Concluding Paragraph:

1. Perhaps add a quotation or surprising insight from the materials you researched.
2. Suggest some action to take or a solution to an issue.
3. Bring up questions for further study.
4. Point out broader consequences of the points you've made.

What NOT to Include in the Concluding Paragraph:

1. Overused phrases: "in conclusion," "in summary," "in closing"

2. A new idea or subtopic

3. Supporting evidence or details (these should be in the body of the essay)

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The end.

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