



## Writing a Conclusion

Your conclusion is an extremely important part of your paper. It is what leaves the greatest impression on the reader since it is what he/she reads last. You should not merely summarize your paper in the conclusion; instead, you should leave your reader with something that will keep him/her thinking about your topic. There are several methods you can use for creating a successful conclusion to your paper.

Some methods for writing a conclusion:

### 1.) Tell your reader why your topic is important—why should he/she care about your topic and what can he/she learn from it?

**Example:** Marriage is one of the most important decisions couples will make together. Taking the time to make the proper arrangements and coordinate all the details of the wedding should be a part of the marriage process. If couples continue to elope or marry after knowing each other for only a short time, many of them will end up living unhappily, and divorce rates in the country will continue to rise. Knowing the person you are going to spend the rest of your life with for many years, long engagements, and even living together before marriage can lead to a solid and successful union between two people.

### 2.) Ask questions for your reader to think about even after he/she has read your paper

**Example:** The “perfect body” image that is portrayed in many magazines leaves impressionable teenage girls with certain ideas of what is considered attractive or beautiful. Airbrushing only serves to further exploit a body image that is unachievable. If editors and photographers continue to promote the thin, big breasted, smooth-skinned female figure, how are young girls who do not resemble these models going to view themselves? Eating disorders, plastic surgery, and depression are only a few extreme effects, but what other consequences may many young girls face as a result of these “perfect body” images?

### 3.) Reiterate what is written in your introduction

*This does not mean that you simply re-write the actual sentences of your introduction. Nor does it mean you simply write your introduction backwards. You can revisit your introduction if you used an anecdote or scenario in it; by referring back to this situation in your conclusion, your paper will be more cohesive.*

#### **Example**

#### **Introduction:**

John Smith is a man in his late thirties who has suffered from alcoholism for approximately fifteen years. In an interview with *Newsweek*, he explains what he believes were the reasons for his addiction initially when he was in his twenties: “I think that it happened because I was really lonely and lost in terms of my future goals. My friends had all moved away and got these great jobs. I had no idea what I wanted to do with my life. I couldn’t see any light at the end of the tunnel. In fact, I couldn’t even see the tunnel itself” (Jones 48). Smith’s

situation is not an uncommon one for many individuals in their twenties. During this time, many experience a sense of panic because they feel that their lives are not moving in the direction they once hoped. If not dealt with properly, this personal crisis can lead to alcohol abuse and addiction.

**Conclusion:**

Later in his interview with *Newsweek*, John Smith, the man who became an alcoholic in his mid-twenties, discussed how he was able to begin to break free of his addiction. He emphasized that attending Alcoholic Anonymous meetings were extremely helpful, but that he also realized with the help of a therapist that “believing there is some sort of ‘correct’ path that we all have to take in life is just ridiculous. I never really looked at the bright side of my situation, how many opportunities were in front of me, and how great this can be. Coming to terms with this has taken off some of the pressure and stress that led me to drink” (Jones 49). It is this repositioning of one’s perspective that can ultimately lead to coming out of an addiction such as Smith’s. When a person with an alcohol addiction realizes that society tends to normalize certain life paths, and that this places an extreme amount of unfair pressure on those do not follow these paths, that person can begin to accept his/her life and come out of the abyss of addiction.

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*The following resource was consulted in the design of this handout:*

Holewa, Randa. “Strategies for Writing a Conclusion.” *LEO: Literacy Education Online*.

17 October 2000. St. Cloud State University. <http://leo.stcloudstate.edu/acadwriter/conclude.html>

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