

Conclusions

by Sophia



WHAT'S COVERED

In this lesson, you will learn how to write an effective conclusion to your academic research essay and why it's important to do so. Specifically, this lesson will focus on:

1. Role of Conclusions

Introductions and conclusions can be the most difficult parts of papers to write. While the body is often easier to write, it needs a frame around it. An introduction and conclusion frame your thoughts and bridge your ideas for the reader.

Just as your introduction acts as a bridge that transports your readers from their own lives into the “place” of your analysis, your conclusion can provide a bridge to help your readers make the transition back to their daily lives.

Such a conclusion will help your readers see why all your analysis and information should matter to them after they put the paper down.

2. Importance of Conclusions

If you still find yourself wondering why you should bother writing a compelling conclusion, here are three good reasons.

1. *Your conclusion is your chance to have the last word on the subject.* The conclusion allows you to have the final say on the issues you have raised in your paper, to synthesize your thoughts, to demonstrate the importance of your ideas, and to propel your reader to a new view of the subject. It is also your opportunity to make a good final impression and to end on a positive note.
2. *Your conclusion can go beyond the confines of the assignment.* The conclusion pushes beyond the boundaries of the prompt and allows you to consider broader issues, make new connections, and elaborate on the significance of your findings.
3. *Your conclusion can make your readers glad they read your paper.* Your conclusion gives your readers something to take away that will help them see things differently or appreciate your topic in personally relevant ways. It can suggest broader implications that will not only interest your readers, but also possibly enrich their lives in some way.

3. Strategies for Writing Conclusions

One or more of the following strategies may help you write an effective conclusion. Once you familiarize yourself with them, you can decide which will work best for you and your assignment.

1. Play the “So what?” game. If you’re stuck and feel like your conclusion isn’t saying anything new or interesting, ask a friend to read it with you. Whenever you make a statement from your conclusion, ask the friend to say, “So what?” or “Why should anybody care?” Then ponder that question and answer it.

IN CONTEXT

You: *Basically, I’m just saying that education was important to Frederick Douglass.*

Friend: *So what?*

You: *Well, it was important because it was a key to him feeling like a free and equal citizen.*

Friend: *Why should anybody care?*

You: *That’s important because plantation owners tried to keep slaves from being educated so that the owners could maintain control. When Douglass obtained an education, he undermined that control personally.*

You can also use this strategy on your own, asking yourself “So what?” as you develop your ideas or your draft.

2. Return to the theme or themes in the introduction. This strategy brings the reader full circle. For example, if you begin by describing a scenario, you can end with the same scenario as proof that your essay is helpful in creating a new understanding. You may also refer to the introductory paragraph by using key words or parallel concepts and images that you also used in the introduction.

3. Synthesize, don’t summarize. Include a brief summary of the paper’s main points, but don’t simply repeat things that were in your paper. Instead, show your reader how the points you made and the support and examples you used fit together.

4. Include a provocative insight or quotation from the research or reading you did for your paper.

5. Propose a course of action, a solution to an issue, or questions for further study. This can redirect your reader’s thought process and help her to apply your info and ideas to her own life, or to see the broader implications.

6. Point to broader implications. For example, if your paper examines the Greensboro sit-ins or another event in the civil rights movement, you could point out its impact on the civil rights movement as a whole. Alternately, a paper about the style of writer Virginia Woolf could point to her influence on other writers or on later feminists.



SUMMARY

In this lesson, you learned that the **role of conclusions** is to leave readers with a sense of the relevance and urgency of your topic. **Conclusions are important** because they help you get the last word on your topic, look beyond the limits of the assignment, and make your readers glad they took the time to read your essay. You also learned some **strategies for writing conclusions** that will help you make them effective and engaging. The strategies you choose will depend on your topic and the specific points you made in your paper.

Best of luck in your learning!

Source: This content has been adapted from Lumen Learning's "Conclusions" tutorial.