

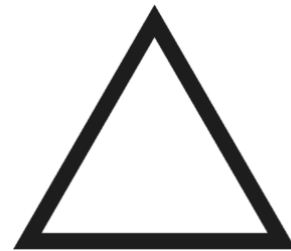
## Conclusions

A conclusion is often the most important part of any paper. It is the last thing your reader will see and will solidify your message in their mind. The end of whatever you are writing must do some very specific things. This handout will explain how to figure out what those things are (depending on what type of genre you are writing) and how best to go about doing them.

### Starting your Conclusion

One of the most common things for a conclusion to include is a restatement and synthesis of the main points of your writing. A narrative will mention some of the plot elements and main themes of the story. An argument will reference some of the stronger points that have been made. A fact paper will put the most salient facts back in front of the reader. This is more than a summary. Your writing has hopefully shifted your reader's knowledge, understanding, and opinions. Restating your points helps you specify that shift. Starting your conclusion with this difference will allow you to create a foundation for the next steps. **Note: Do not repeat any part of your paper. Your conclusion should restate your main points without using the same words and phrases that you have already used.**

### Conclusion Triangle



Visualize your conclusion as a triangle. You need to begin with the point of your paper and end with a broad point of view to let your reader leave your paper smoothly.

### Adding Significance

One of the most important things to remember about conclusions is that **they are not just summary**. Summary, while important, is a way to make the next parts of the conclusion more meaningful. Giving your reader insight into the relationship between your writing and the real world is far more important than simply telling your reader what you have already said. Have a look at the difference between a cover letter that ends with a summary of its main points and a cover letter that turns those points into something more meaningful.

#### *Cover Letter Conclusion with Simple Summary*

As I have said, I have a degree in Mechanical Engineering and experience in many projects. While my previous jobs were not identical to this one, they had aspects that were very similar. I hope you will take these things into consideration when making your decision.

### *Cover Letter Conclusion with Significance*

My degree in Mechanical Engineering, as well as the many projects I had to do to attain it, show that I'm both hardworking and competent. This is further demonstrated by my previous job experience. If you hire me, you will be taking these rare aspects of character and leveraging them to improve your company.

### **Creating a Final Statement**

Condensing your work into a few lines provides the information synthesis required for the final piece of the conclusion. There are several different ways to look at the final statement that your reader will see.

#### *An Answer to the "So What?" Question*

It is always difficult to make sure your reader cares about what you have written. However, doing this successfully is the difference between your reader remembering and applying your message and forgetting your work immediately. Discussing the significance and the applicability of your writing makes it so your reader is left with an obvious reason to care.

#### *Answer to the "So What?" Question in a Political Policy Argument*

As you can see, changing the hours that the parking meters operate is not an insignificant issue. It is a choice that affects our community deeply, and choosing unwisely could have dire effects in the next election.

#### *A Call to Action*

This is similar to answering the "So What?" question, but it includes some clear action that the reader should be taking. This can be a direct address to the reader but does not necessarily have to be. It can also be implied. Essentially, it is a method that forces the reader to admit that agreement with your message requires more than simply reading your work.

#### *Call to Action in a Political Policy Argument*

I have demonstrated that the current parking meter hours are inefficient and ineffective. It is, therefore, unthinkable that they remain the way that they are for any longer. We need to rectify this issue immediately by ordering the new plaques and updating the by-laws to allow for the new hours.

#### *A "Mic Drop" Moment*

A conclusion can and often should end with an emotional or rhetorical flourish. Leaving your readers with their mind blown or their foundations shaken is a good method for remaining memorable. However, it is important to make certain that this ending is relevant and doesn't undermine your message.

#### *"Mic Drop" in a Political Policy Argument*

Our meters, and the hours that they operate, do far more than regulate parking in our city. They meter out tiny conveniences of life, twenty-five cents at a time.

## Quick Tips

<i>Do:</i>	<i>Do Not:</i>
Synthesize	Summarize
Add significance	Repeat yourself
Reiterate the importance of your message	Add new information
Leave your reader with an impression	Forget to write a conclusion

### Activity: Conclusion Questionnaire

This activity is a series of questions that should help you figure out what should go in your conclusion. After you have finished this activity, use your answers to begin your conclusion.

Question 1: What is the main message of your paper?

Question 2: Who is the intended audience for this paper?

Question 3: Why should your audience care about what you have to say? Be specific.

Question 4: Does your reader need to take any action now that they understand your message? If so, what should that action be?

Question 5: What can you do to make this paper memorable?

### References

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