

CONCLUSIONS

Because the final paragraph plays such a key role in a paper, almost all writers struggle with writing conclusions. You might begin a conclusion by reminding the reader of your thesis and main points, but a conclusion is not a summary. A successful conclusion brings your argument to a logical close; it is where you justify your argument to the reader. Use your conclusion to describe the consequences of your argument, to answer the question “why is my argument important?”

Strategies for conclusions

The content of a conclusion depends on many factors, including the specifics of the assignment, your audience, the style of the discipline, and the expectations of your professor.

Possible strategies include

- Proposing a course of action, a solution to an issue, or questions for further study.
- Raising qualifications to your argument (limiting or opposing viewpoints).
- Including a detail or example from the introduction to bring the argument full circle.
- Including a provocative insight or quotation from the reading.

Other suggestions

- Do not begin with the unnecessary and over-worked phrase “in conclusion.”
- Make a reasonable final claim; don’t overstate your findings.
- Take special care with your final sentence; make sure it is carefully constructed and leaves a strong impression.
- Disciplinary expectations vary. Check with your professor for discipline-specific advice, e.g., whether you may include a new idea or a quotation in the conclusion.

See over for sample conclusions

Sample Conclusions

For Philosophy 110

It is a natural, human inclination to wonder if God exists. Aquinas, like many other philosophers, attempted to prove God's existence through logical reasoning. His arguments, however, seem to be based on the presumption that there is in fact a God. He went on from this supposition to question human concepts, such as the way that we determine what is good, true, and noble. If no obvious, tangible cause for a concept or behavior could be found, he concluded that God must be the cause and then claimed proof of God's existence. Aquinas was clearly biased in his study of God; he seemed to have a firm belief that God exists before he began the process of logical reasoning. This fault would be a problem for anyone trying to prove God's existence through concrete logic. There is something uncertain and enigmatic about the concepts of God and religious belief that logic will never be able to penetrate.

For English 150

The physical disabilities of the girl serve as symbolic functions that affect how the reader interprets her relationship with the magistrate. These injuries lend themselves to symbolism because they are reflections of the weaknesses in all people—the insecurities, the compassion, and the love for one another that may manifest itself in various forms. Coetzee applies this symbolism to the complex relationship between two very different characters. The effect is a complicated and often contradictory representation of love and the emotions closely related to it.

For Government 112

The coming of capitalism and modernization to China does not indicate that democracy will follow. Strong forces both within and without the CCP ensure that the status quo of one-party politics will remain. According to political theorist Samuel Huntington, there are three ways a country can democratize. There can be transformation of the power elites; however, the likelihood of this occurring under Hu Jintao, with supporters in the Standing Committee, is slim. Democratic transition may occur through replacement, but the support the CCP receives from wealthy entrepreneurs and the middle class precludes the likelihood of collapse or overthrow. Transformation, the third path to democratization, is a mixture of the first two forms and thus unlikely. The verdict is in; despite prospects for democracy, the hallmark of the present era will be increased market reform without the democratic baggage.

Acknowledgments

Thank you to the S '04 writing tutors for thoughtful comments and to Sarah Gould '05 and Matthew Marks '05 for permission to use sample conclusions.