

Conclusions—Why bother?

- Your conclusion is your chance to have the last word on the subject. Just as it is important to make a good first impression, it is also important to make a good final impression. It would be a shame to devote great amounts of time and effort to your introduction, your thesis, your argument, your evidence, and so on, only to have the paper fall flat at the end because of a weak conclusion.
- Your conclusion can go beyond the confines of the assignment. The conclusion pushes the boundaries of the question and allows you to consider broader issues, make new connections, and elaborate on the significance of your findings. Essentially, your conclusion can help answer the question, “So what?”
- Your conclusion should also add a comprehensive element to your essay by offering a new perspective on either your argument or the work of literature you are analyzing. See strategies below for ideas on how to do this.

Strategies for Coming up with an Effective, Interesting Conclusion

- 1) Play the “So what?” Game. If you’re stuck and feel like your conclusion isn’t saying anything new or interesting, ask yourself the question, “So What?” What is the larger significance of your argument? Why would somebody write a whole story or poem on that one topic? Relate your argument to a more universal claim about human nature *that you haven’t yet touched upon in your essay*.
- 2) Try incorporating a quote from your text that seems random and unimportant but that you can show actually captures a perspective of your argument if interpreted the right way!
- 3) Bring in a minor character or detail that you haven't yet addressed and show how it relates to your novel as well.
- 4) Explain how your specific argument can change how people understand the book.

In your conclusion, DO NOT . . .

- repeat your thesis using the same words that you have elsewhere in the paper.
- write some vague, bland sentences just to take up space. No conclusion is better than a conclusion that seems “fake.”