

Writing Effective Concluding Paragraphs

Effective concluding paragraphs usually have some common characteristics:

- **Remind readers what the essay has explained.** A concluding paragraph summarizes an essay's argument in very concise terms. A concluding paragraph should never introduce new points that have not been developed in the body. You should also avoid repeating the same words you used in the body. Summarize the main points in new words with new transitions. Some transition words you may be able to use in the conclusion include: *in conclusion, in summary, in short, on the whole, overall, in brief, briefly, concisely, succinctly, clearly, evidently, plainly, obviously, and undoubtedly*. If you summarize your main points effectively, you should not need too many transition words.
- **Offer readers a new viewpoint or insight.** Although a concluding paragraph should not introduce content, you should try to synthesize the main points you developed in your essay. *Synthesis* involves combining your main points into a new idea or concept. The synthesis tells readers what you learned about your issue. You should always emphasize, but not exaggerate, the importance and relevance of the synthesis. An effective synthesis causes readers to look at your issue in a new way.
- **Make a lasting impression on readers.** The last sentence of your concluding paragraph should be memorable. Think about how you engaged readers in your essay with your introduction. You may be able to expand on the same approach in the conclusion. Sometimes, the conclusion challenges readers to do or think about something in the future. In other cases, leaving readers with a new question to consider may be most effective.