

Styles of Conclusion

The conclusion is the final part of an essay and as such one of the most important: after all, it is the last thing the audience will read so will play a significant part in their overall perception of the work as a whole.

The exact role of a conclusion will depend heavily on the type of paper being written. The conclusion of a narrative essay, for example, will be much different from that of a paper in the social sciences or the physical sciences. That said, some of the following styles or techniques of conclusion can be used in a variety of instances. The various techniques can even be combined to achieve various effects.

- **Answer research questions:** For research papers, the conclusion is frequently the primary location in which the author explains in full his or her results. Often, a strong essay will show how these results directly connect to the research questions raised at the start of the essay.
- **Explaining the significance of findings:** In addition to sharing the results of a study or studies, the conclusion can also be used to share why these results are significant. The goal of such a conclusion is to make clear to the reader why the research question being considered was worthwhile and how the results reached advance the particular field of study. As part of this, the writer may also want to **offer fresh insight** on the question at hand, to show how it can be viewed in different ways.
- **Making recommendations for future research:** In many instances, particularly in the physical sciences (physics, chemistry, etc.), one particular study will only answer a small part of a larger question. Even after the research is concluded, and even if a strong result is achieved, there are likely to be many more questions left to answer. The conclusion, then, is a prime place in which the author of a paper can suggest avenues of further investigation for other researchers or for themselves.
- **Offer other potential conclusions:** A good scientific paper will try to rule out any other competing results but will be honest if such potential results remain. A conclusion can be a good place to share those possibilities.
- **Consider how topics apply to other questions:** One way in which a conclusion can serve future research is to show the connections between various forms of inquiry. A history paper, for example, may ask questions that have applications to literature or to the sciences. A conclusion is a great place to point out those connections for the purpose of future studies.

These are just a few of the potential techniques or styles that can be used in conclusions. It can be useful to ask an instructor for advice on a particular assignment. In general, though, one of these styles can be used for just about any essay.