

# Writing Conclusions

Many writers reach their conclusion feeling they have nothing left to say and resort to simply summarizing the main points in an attempt to end the paper. In doing so they miss out on a perfect opportunity to draw their whole paper together (“synthesize”), show readers why their point or argument is important and given the paper a sense of completeness and significance.

## Ideas

**Echo the introduction:** This is a good strategy if your aim is to bring your reader full-circle and show them how much they’ve learned about your topic during the course of reading your paper.

*In conclusion, to return to the case of Malala Yousafzai, it is clear that individual cases of advocacy can make a significant difference for the global women’s rights movement. While Malala’s case is somewhat unique in the level of international support it garnered, the other examples addressed in this paper clearly show that individual advocacy cases are a significant force in the drive for education, legal empowerment, and opportunities for women.*

**Challenge the reader:** Show them how the information in the paper can be applied in real life.

*Though serving on a jury is not only a civic responsibility but also an interesting experience, many people still view jury duty as a chore that interrupts their jobs and the routine of their daily lives. However, juries are part of Canada’s attempt to be a free and just society. Thus, jury duty challenges us to be interested and responsible citizens.*

**Point to the broader implications:** This strategy can emphasize the importance of your paper.

*Without well-qualified teachers, schools are little more than buildings and equipment. If higher-paying careers continue to attract the best and the brightest students, there will not only be a shortage of teachers, but the teachers available may not be the ones with the best qualifications. Our youth will suffer. And when youth suffers, the future suffers.*

**Pose a thought-provoking question:** This strategy may help your readers gain a new perspective on the topic and may help bring your ideas together to create a new meaning.

*Campaign advertisements should help us understand the candidate’s qualifications and positions on the issues. Instead, most focus on the perceived inadequacies of the opposing candidate, or they present general images of the candidate as a well-rounded, family person. Do such advertisements contribute to creating an informed electorate, or a people who choose political leaders the same way they choose soft drinks and soap?*

**Push the boundaries:** Forecast future trends and the need for future research. Consider broader issues, make new connections, and elaborate on the significance of your findings.

*The current millennial generation is the first generation for whom the Internet has always existed. While there are a few studies that have tried to examine the impact on cognitive development of growing up in a fast-paced, information-driven environment, it is still an emerging area of research and our current knowledge about the effects of technology on cognitive development is limited. Further inter-generational comparative research on skills and knowledge acquisition is vital to determine the effects on our brains of growing up in a world dominated by technology.*

# Avoid

A flat summary with no new interpretation

Introducing a significant new idea or subtopic

Presenting evidence that should be in the body of the paper

Thinking that you have to solve a significant issue (like world hunger) in the final sentence

## Sample structure

### Link to previous paragraph

*In conclusion, there is a great deal of value to a university-program that incorporates work experience in the form of a practicum.*

**Offer a brief summary where you refer back to problems or issues foreshadowed in the introduction and identify solutions.**

*Even though practicum experiences can be stressful for students in terms of the time demands and new learning challenges, students can be successful if they are offered proper support by their learning institution and their advisors, teachers, and peers.*

### Identify main reasons/causes/factors

*An increasingly tough job market and ever more demanding employers mean that university programs have to adapt to better prepare their students for life after graduation.*

### Reinforce the thesis statement

*The practicum experience offers students an unparalleled opportunity to gain real-life work experience, make valuable contacts, and boost their resumes prior to entering the job market.*

### Recommendations/speculation on future action

*By working to develop practicum experiences in conjunction with employers, universities have the opportunity not only to move with the times and offer the most thorough educational experience possible, but can also ensure that their successful future graduates are more likely, as employers themselves, to recognize how valuable their practicum experience was and be prepared to work in collaboration with the university for the betterment of future generations of alumni.*

**Some of the techniques and examples in this handout are adapted from**

*Basic Writing: A First Course*, by Peter Carino, Harper Collins, 1991.

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