

A Not-So Short Guide to Writing Conclusions

A conclusion should . . .

- stress the importance of the thesis statement but not restate it *verbatim*
- give the essay a sense of completeness, and
- leave a final impression on the reader.

Suggestions:

- **Answer the question "So What?"**

Show your readers why this paper was important. Show them that your paper was meaningful and useful.

- **Synthesize, don't summarize**

Don't simply repeat things that were in your paper. They have read it. Show them how the points you made and the support and examples you used were not random, but fit together. Why was it important that my reader just read this? What value does it impart? What lesson or point should my reader take from this?

- **Redirect your readers**

Give your reader something to think about, perhaps a way to use your paper in the "real" world. Think of this as linking your argument to the BIG PICTURE. If your introduction went from general to specific, make your conclusion go from specific to general. Think globally, if applicable.

- **Create a new meaning**

You don't have to give new information to create a new meaning. By demonstrating how your ideas work together, you can create a new picture. Often the sum of the paper is worth more than its parts.

Example

Conclusion #1

"Sailing to Byzantium" by William Butler Yeats is a poem packed with emotion and meaning. It depicts a man striving to reach a better place while leaving a piece of his soul behind for all time. It expresses the weariness and frustration that everyone experiences at some point, but especially with the aging process. It encompasses human desires and emotions and presents them almost as though they were in a dream. However, it is almost as though the imaginative wording of the poem makes it easier to see the reality behind its message. The poem refreshes

the craving people have for a better world with no hardships, and the need they have to leave a part of themselves here to sing eternally "Of what is past, or passing, or to come" (32).