

How to Write a Conclusion

..... a practical handout

Answer the question “So what?”

The purpose of your conclusion is to tell your reader the purpose of all the information you have given them in your paper. Depending on the type of paper, you have a few options for the style of conclusion you will write.

- a. Synthesize
- b. Editorialize
- c. Externalize

Synthesize, don't summarize.

To synthesize means to combine existing elements. Since your reader has already read your paper, you don't want to summarize or repeat the things that were in your paper. Instead, highlight the main points from your paper that you think are important, emphasizing them in a different way than before. One strategy is to dedicate one sentence to each main point from your paper.

Example

Introduction

Winning the Best Novel category of the Agatha Award in 2004, *Birds of a Feather* is classified as a detective novel set in London a few years after the first World War. Despite the historical setting, there are certain elements that do not fit into Agatha Christie's cozy mystery criteria. In fact, it should be classified as contemporary detective fiction with historical elements. This paper will argue that *Birds of a Feather* should not have been awarded the Agatha Award because the novel does not have enough of the cozy elements—the key criteria for Christie's novels. Winspear's novel should be classified as something entirely different than Christie's mysteries and the stereotypical rough-house detectives.

Conclusion

The unique differences between Christie and Winspear emphasize the need for diversity in detective fiction. Winspear does not fit in the cozy subgenre and neither should Christie make room for her. Nevertheless, Winspear's cozy murders are too clean to fit with the hard-boiled detectives. *Birds of a Feather* barely fits comfortably into the contemporary genre due to its strange and unnecessary supernatural elements. Although this novel was enjoyable enough, it should not have been awarded the Agatha Award. In comparison, it was nowhere near as enjoyable or manipulative as Christie's novels. The mystery itself was weak and even the contemporariness was not as convincing. Although a talented writer, Winspear should not have been put on the same pedestal as one of the best writers in detective fiction.

Editorialize

Editorial conclusions allow you, the writer, to share your opinions of the topic (such as your interpretations, concerns, feelings, etc.). Using an editorial conclusion depends on the type of paper you are writing (such as argumentative or a response) and the overall assignment.

Example

Overall, I think the author provided enough introductory information about Intelligent Design. However, as I continued reading the packet, I noticed two arguments, rather than the one Discovery Institute kept addressing. The methods behind Intelligent Design are confusing and not fully explained, thus weakening their argument in the evolution debate.

Externalize

Externalize conclusions present a solution to the problem or ongoing argument you've covered. Or even how the problem may continue and affect the future if it isn't resolved.

Example

Sharks are a necessity in the ecosystem and should be protected from hunting. Today, there are many laws that regulate the fishing of sharks and the selling of fins. However, these laws are not enforced, and sharks are still being killed for sport. Educating the public could also reduce illegal fishing and finning as long as it is accomplished through a reputable source. If we want to avoid placing all sharks on the endangered species list, then laws must be enforced and the public educated.

Create a new meaning.

You don't have to give new information to create a new meaning. By demonstrating how your ideas work together and how they apply to the "bigger picture", it will help give your essay more power and greater meaning. Think locally and globally. Does your analysis have suggestions for the community or for others studying the same topic? Concluding paragraphs that suggest these types of connections are common in academic research projects.

Example

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 America's attempt to be a free and just society. Thus, jury duty challenges us to be interested and responsible citizens.

Stop when you're finished.

Make sure your conclusion paragraph does not include any new information or go against what you want the reader to believe. Avoid boring your reader by adding any unnecessary summarization. Once you've covered all your points and are satisfied with your work, stop and take a deep breath.

References

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