

## The Conclusion Paragraph

Said by some to be the hardest paragraph to write, the conclusion paragraph wraps up your paper. It is the last thing your reader sees, so it will be one of the images that sticks with your reader. Without writing the words, "The End," your reader would realize that this is, indeed, the end of the paper. Your introduction states your topic, your body explains each point of your topic, and your conclusion paragraph wraps all those points back into the topic.

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.

Redirect your readers

Give your reader something to think about, perhaps a way to use your paper in the "real" world. If your introduction went from general to specific, make your conclusion go from specific to general. Think globally.

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.

"Move for Change" Conclusion:

Eating disorders are unrecognized but still continue to affect numerous young teens in the United States. Parents, schools, and everyone in society needs to become more involved!

"Interesting Comment" Conclusion:

Eighty percent of people who try to get help for their problems will not commit suicide. Therefore, now is the time for everyone to recognize that suicide is a serious problem that can be helped.

Rules for conclusion paragraphs:

Do not announce that this is the end. For example: avoid "In conclusion," "In summary," "To sum up," and "Overall."

Do not make a new point. Any new information should be included in the body of the paper.

Do not restate the thesis.

Do not leave with questions.

Here is an introduction paragraph from a previous student paper:

In the mid 1900's more than eighty percent of children grew up in intact families. By 1980 only fifty percent were expected to be living with both parents throughout their childhood (Whitehead 148). Divorce affects children in a negative way; however, the effects differ throughout their developmental stages. Children react differently depending on their current age at the time of divorce. These different reactions are observed in three major age groups: pre-school (3-5 years), school-aged (6-12 years), and adolescence (13-18 years).

Now check out the conclusion paragraph of that same paper. Notice that it does not announce itself nor restate the thesis:

Throughout a divorce, children of all age groups experience fear, anger, depression, hopes for reconciliation, sadness, anxiety, self-blame, and abandonment. However, they lack the understanding and maturity needed to deal with these emotions ("Getting"). Dr. Lee Salk states, "Children are the true victims of divorce, yet their role in divorce has traditionally been ignored" (Salk 58). In the preschool years children feel they are left in the dark, but are painfully aware of changes in their environment. School- aged children are the most likely to become depressed and blame themselves, but they need to work through their feelings by talking about them. During the adolescent period of the developmental process, teenagers' reactions to divorce range from emotional isolation to rebellious, attention-getting behaviors. The many troublesome behaviors that children show as a result of their parents' divorce, clearly illustrate the negative effects of divorce on children.