



Writing a conclusion

Essays don't stop, they *end*. The conclusion leaves the reader thinking about the argument made. If it is well-written, it will reaffirm your position and leave a strong impression; if not, the reader may be left with questions.

What do you write in a conclusion?

The conclusion restates, but does not reargue, your position. It should not contain any 'new' information – no surprises or reveals.

Conclusions include:

- a re-wording of the thesis statement
- a summary of the main points made in each paragraph of your essay
- a summary of any recommendations made throughout the essay (optional)
- a general statement about the wider implications or applicability of what you have written about
- future research suggestions (optional).

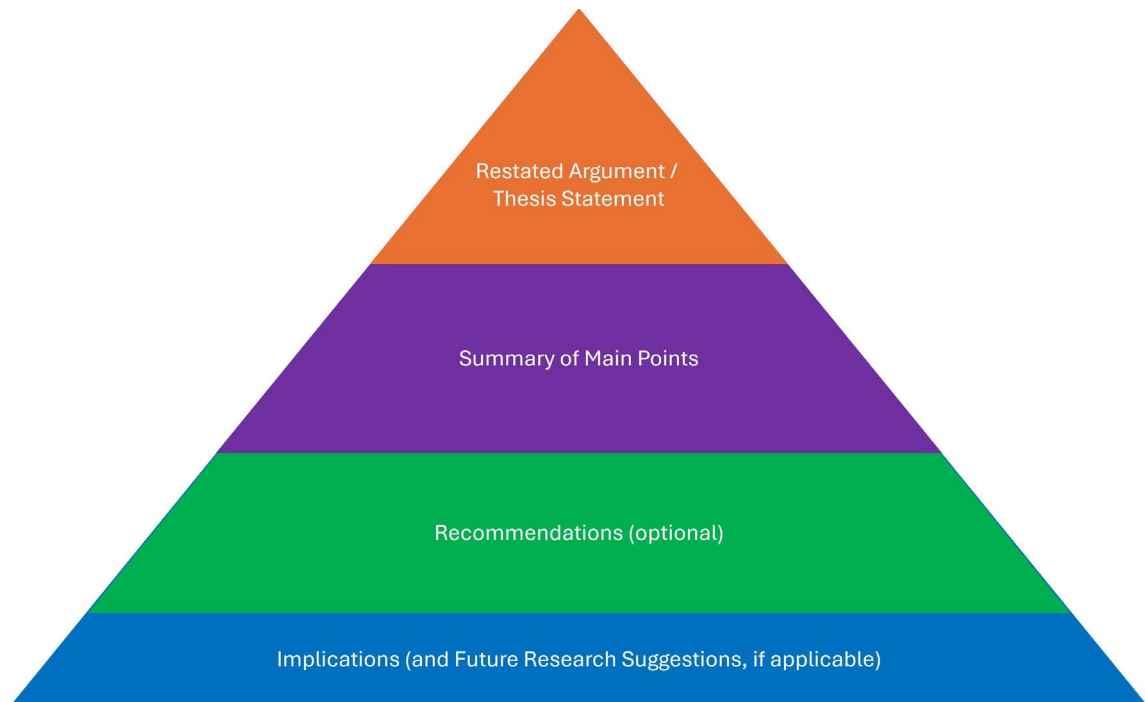


Figure 1: The structure of a conclusion.

Image long description: the structure of a conclusion represented as a triangular diagram separated into 4 sections. The top of the triangle is an orange section "Restated Argument / Thesis Statement", followed by a purple section "Summary of Main Points", followed by a green section "Recommendations (optional)", followed by a blue section at the base of the triangle "Implications (and Future Research Suggestions, if applicable)".

The conclusion should move from specific to more general information (the opposite to the introduction).

Things to consider

Ask yourself:

- (Implications) Why is it significant? What is the impact?

Example of a good conclusion

Question:

Injuries sustained during extreme sports should not be treated at publicly-funded hospitals. Write an essay considering this proposition.

Conclusion:

To conclude, then, this essay has argued that injuries sustained during extreme sports should be treated at publicly-funded hospitals; indeed, that the public health sector has a moral, democratic and financial duty to do so. As has been shown, restricting access to health services has little effect in deterring extreme sporting injury, increases associated administrative and legal costs in assessing cases, and violates the social contract established in foundation and cost base of Australia's multi-payer health care system. Australia's current approach is appropriate, cost-effective and responds to the mandate established by the Australian electorate.

← Restated Argument / Thesis Statement

← Summary of Main Points

← Implications

Figure 2: Example of a conclusion.

Image long description: an example of a conclusion with different coloured text based on different components. Orange text labelled "Restated Argument / Thesis Statement" reads: "To conclude, then, this essay has argued that injuries sustained during extreme sports should be treated at publicly-funded hospitals; indeed, that the public health sector has a moral, democratic and financial duty to do so." This is followed by purple text labelled "Summary of Main Points": "As has been shown, restricting access to health services has little effect in deterring extreme sporting injury, increases associated administrative and legal costs in assessing cases, and violates the social contract established in foundation and cost base of Australia's multi-payer health care system." Lastly, blue text labelled "Implications": "Australia's current approach is appropriate, cost-effective and responds to the mandate established by the Australian electorate".

When do you write the conclusion?

Write the conclusion last, once you have had time to reflect on your points. You need a strong finish to leave a good impression.

You could try writing the introduction and conclusion together; this makes it easier to establish clear links between the two.

Tips

- The conclusion is usually about 10% of your essay and forms one paragraph. For a report, or anything with subheadings, it can be a little longer; but one paragraph is usually appropriate.
- Learn from the work of others. Pay attention to how established writers conclude journal articles and book chapters. Explore their structure, use of connecting words, and overall academic language and style.

Final checks

Compare your conclusion with your introduction.

- Did you end up making the same argument that you introduced? Is your argument consistent? If not, consider modifying your introduction as your ideas may have developed during the writing process.
- Have you addressed the essay topic?

Tips

- Proofreading is very important. Look for spelling (Australian English), grammar, typing errors, repetitive wording, paragraph length, connecting sentences and linking words.
- Leave plenty of time for editing. Try to finish writing your essay in advance so you can take a couple of days away from it and then edit your work with a clear mind.