

CONCLUSION PARAGRAPHS

According to the “perfect” paper outline, a conclusion’s sentences are:

- I. Conclusion
 - a. Restate the thesis
 - b. Summarize the points
 - c. Final thoughts to readers
 - d. Final thoughts to readers
 - e. Final thoughts to readers

A. Restate the thesis: Restate, but do NOT copy verbatim. Remember my TKAM example:

A New York firefighter enters the Second Tower without hesitation, a soldier patrols a dangerous terrain of the desert, and a Virginia Tech professor dives in front of a gun providing time for his class to escape; these heroic examples undeniably demonstrate a tremendous amount of courage. Courage, however, can be found in many forms and range from daring deeds of life saving portion to simple acts of kindness. The novel *To Kill a Mockingbird*, by Harper Lee, focuses on courage as a central theme of the book. Through the circumstances of Mrs. Henry Lafayette Dubose, Boo Radley, and Tom Robinson, Lee endeavors to teach a lesson in recognizing situations that require valor. **Harper Lee uses her novel to suggest bravery is measured, not by the popularity of the choice, but by the courage it takes to triumph over moral injustice.**

When I write my conclusion’s first sentence, it is important that I capture the bolded idea without sounding repetitive. Papers, like the ones you are writing now, and will for the ACT/MME, are way too short to have any lines be copied. In fact the graders will mark you down if you use the exact same words. Therefore, a first sentence for me might sound like:

To Kill a Mockingbird is the quintessential example of the courage it requires to advocate for personal convictions in the face of adversity.

Now you try with your thesis:

B. Summarize the points: Again, the importance is NOT stating the points exactly like you had earlier in the paper. Notice above the “points” sentence in the introduction example. Compare that sentence with how I might rework it for my conclusion:

Harper Lee utilizes the condition of Mrs. Henry Lafayette Dubose, uniqueness of Boo Radley’s appearance and the predicament of Tom Robinson to showcase the many types of situations that necessitate strength in beliefs and actions.

Now you try with your points – be sure to look back at your intro:

C-E. Final thoughts to reader: At the end of the paper, the hope is that you have made an impact on your reader. What should you do here at the end – well what is the last morsel of idea you want to leave me (your audience) thinking about.

The general idea of the conclusion is that it is the reverse of an introduction paragraph. Remember intros are funnels starting with the broadest statement applying to all readers then funneling down to your specific thesis. The conclusion reworks that thesis, broadens out to your points, then broadens even more to relate back to the over all audience.

Those final words are not as rigid as the rest of the paper and are up to you, but here are a few suggestions:

- ❖ Answer the “So What?” question, in essence, applying your idea to the reader’s world. “So what” is the importance of your idea or “So why” is this importance to the audience.
 - Or
- ❖ Use humor – final sentences that makes the reader chuckle while still referencing your topic will make a lasting impression. Only use humor if it is appropriate, however, as incorporating humor in some situations can be seen as offensive.
 - Or
- ❖ Reference the title (if it is clever) or the Attention Getter – final sentence that reincorporate your initial scenario will give a “circle” effect to your essay. The effect usually make the audience feel satisfied or as if everything is complete.
 - Or
- ❖ Challenging the reader -- By issuing a challenge to your readers, you are helping to redirect the information in the paper. They may apply it to their own lives.
 - Or
- ❖ Look to the future: Looking to the future can emphasize the importance of your paper or redirect the readers' thought process. It may help them apply the new information to their lives or see things more globally.

You say: Con seriously?

Yes, seriously – I get it – the last few sentences are the toughest to write because they have the least amount of structure. Much like the Attention Getter, you must be creative, yet still relate. You have written a great paper though...it would be a shame to have completed all that hard work for naught. Try a couple of the methods above and ask a partner which one is the best. Do not “cheap out” because you want to “be done” or because you run out of time.