Drafting an Effective Conclusion
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When drafting an effective research paper, how the paper ends is often just as important as how the paper opens. Since an introduction serves to set the stage for a paper and provide readers with a “roadmap” of what to expect in the paper and the overall thesis or research question, an effective conclusion provides resolution to your paper. Though there is no one definitive way to approach a conclusion, several tips are presented below may help you effectively close your paper.

What a Conclusion Should Accomplish
Effective conclusions should accomplish most, if not all, of the following key purposes:

• Conclusions should revisit the main points and thesis of the overall paper in a substantial way that goes beyond summary.

• For example, now that your points have been analyzed and presented in the body of your paper, what new insight can the audience take away from this paper that connects to the broader aspects of your topic?

• Answering the “So What?” of your paper: How is your argument relevant to your readers?

• What information in your paper will your audience be able to use beyond your paper? Alternatively, what are the consequences if your audience doesn’t grasp the larger point of your argument?

• Presenting closure and resolution: An effective conclusion should give your audience a sense of closure and resolution related to your topic, connecting all your ideas into a larger “take-away”. Your conclusion should weave your points together to demonstrate that they were not random and disconnected from one another.

• Lastly, a conclusion should place your paper/argument/research in a broader context and signal new things for your audience to think about beyond your paper.

Tips for Effective Conclusions
When drafting a conclusion, there are many different places to begin but some helpful questions to consider include:

• What has my research shown over the course of my paper? What is the larger idea that the audience can take away from my main points?

• What are the implications of how this research was approached? How does my paper compare to other approaches to this topic?
• What are the limitations of my topic and how do they relate to the broader conversation or state of knowledge related to this topic? For example, where does this paper on car pollution fit into the bigger picture of climate change?

• What are the impacts, implications, or possible consequences of my research/argument? What are potential concerns for this topic?

• Is there room for more research or discussion regarding this topic? What are some possible next steps that researchers can take? What should be done next?

• What larger point can my audience take away from this paper that can help them understand their own lives, concerns, or the world around them?

• What larger point discussed in my introduction would be helpful to revisit here? How can I bring the conversation full-circle?

**Things Not to Do in a Conclusion**

• **Do not introduce new claims or abruptly insert new supporting information:** At this point in a conclusion, it is helpful to tie the points together that you have already introduced. Introducing new information in your conclusion can distract your audience from the larger point you are trying to make.

• **Do not forget to clearly synthesize the main points of your paper and bring them together:** Depending on the length of your paper, your audience may need to be reminded of your points in a clear fashion in order to fully conceptualize the larger take-away of your paper.

• **Do not apologize for negative results or gaps/limitations of research:** If your topic concerns a relatively newer topic (like quantum tunneling applications), it is helpful in a conclusion to discuss how this may impact the research question of the paper and the main take-away of your paper. However, it is important to discuss this objectively in how it may limit your main point instead of impede your own research process.