

Concluding Strategies: Some Guidelines

Selected devices for concluding paragraphs:

1. Use one of the devices suggested for introductory paragraphs but avoid using the same device in both the introduction and conclusion.
2. Summarize the main points of the essay.
3. Call for awareness and/or action. For example, if you are writing a paper supporting the position that sex education should be taught in public schools, you might say something like, “Teen pregnancy is a growing problem, and, without proper education, the problem will only continue to worsen.”
4. Point to the future. For instance, if you are writing a paper supporting human cloning, you might say something like, “Provided it is used to benefit society, human cloning could be considered one of the most exciting scientific advances of the 21st century.”

What to avoid in concluding paragraphs:

1. Don't go off track. Avoid introducing a new idea or adding a fact that belongs in the body of the essay.
2. Don't simply reword the introduction. Avoid just listing the main idea in each topic or restating the thesis. If your introduction and conclusion are interchangeable, you need to revise. To check yourself, read your introductory paragraph(s) and then your concluding paragraph(s). Your conclusion should logically follow your introduction; they should not be exactly the same but should make sense when read together.
3. Don't announce what you have done. Avoid statements such as “In this paper I have tried to show the main causes for . . .”
4. Don't make absolute claims. Avoid statements such as “This proves that . . .” or “This definitely shows that . . .”
5. Don't apologize. Avoid casting doubt on your material with statements such as “Even though I am not an expert” or “I don't know much about this subject, but this is what I think about it.”