

# HOW TO WRITE A CONCLUDING PARAGRAPH

## Lesson Objective

In this lesson, you will practice writing a concluding paragraph. You want to leave your reader with a lasting impression, don't you? In your conclusion, you get a chance to sum up your main points and leave your reader with something to think about. Let's start by thinking about memorable experiences from childhood.

## Writing Warm-Up

Get a blank piece of paper and freewrite for five minutes about a memorable person or experience from your childhood. If you choose a person, choose someone who is not a friend or family member that you are currently in touch with.

1. How old were you in this memory?  
Why do you think your memory was tied to that age?
2. What do you wish you could remember about your childhood?
3. Who is memorable from your childhood (not a family member or close friend)? Why do you think this person sticks out?

## Vocabulary Preview

Match these words to their correct definitions.

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|-----------------------------|--|
| _____ 1. lasting impression | a) to express in a different way   |
| _____ 2. sum up             | b) a feeling or memory that lasts a long time                            |
| _____ 3. in touch           | c) a positive thought  |
| _____ 4. concise            | d) overused  |
| _____ 5. rephrase           | e) to review or summarize at the end                                     |
| _____ 6. fresh              | f) connecting with regularly   |
| _____ 7. high note          | g) as short as possible, keeping to the main point                       |
| _____ 8. come full circle   | h) new and clean, not the same as usual                                  |
| _____ 9. compelling         | i) interesting   |
| _____ 10. cliché            | j) to feel like one is back at the beginning again after a lot of change |

## Elements of a Strong Concluding Paragraph

The main purpose of a conclusion is to remind your reader of what your purpose was and to review your main points. This is tricky, because you do not want to use the exact same wording from your introduction and topic sentences. You need to be a bit creative to write a strong conclusion.

### 1. Rephrase Your Thesis

Before you start writing your conclusion, look back at your introductory paragraph. Find your thesis statement and rewrite it in a fresh way. You may need to try a few different times to get it right. Look for synonyms that you can use. Can you change the sentence structure?

#### TASK 1

Rephrase the following thesis statement:  
The best time to visit New York City is springtime.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. Remind Your Reader of Your Main Points

In your conclusion, you need to remind your reader what you told them already. Do this by wrapping up your main points. This does not mean that you should write out each main point separately like you did in your introduction. You need to express how they are all related.

#### TASK 2

Review these main topic sentences and try to rephrase them as one or two sentences for a conclusion.

1. Spring is an affordable time to visit New York City.
2. Spring is the most comfortable time to tour around NYC.
3. There are many things to see and do in New York City in the springtime.

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#### Keep in mind...

A concluding paragraph is NOT an opportunity to include new points or evidence. You should keep your conclusion as concise as possible.

## Elements of a Strong Concluding Paragraph cont.

After the two previous necessities are taken care of, leave your reader with a lasting impression. Here are two techniques that you can use in your conclusion.

### 3. Help the Reader Come Full Circle

At the end of an essay, a reader should feel like they've taken a journey. Your essay should have done everything that you set out to do in your thesis.

Give your reader the feeling of coming full circle by using **keywords** related your topic.

If you asked a question or started with a quote in your introduction, find a way to tie it back in at the end.

#### TASK 3

Read the following introductory paragraph. What keywords from the introduction *could* be used in the conclusion to remind the reader about how the essay began?

*The great American artist Georgia O'Keefe painted the perfect picture of New York City when she said, "One can't paint New York as it is, but rather as its felt." Everyone should get the chance to experience New York City at least once in a lifetime. New York City has a different feel in every season. The best time to visit the Big Apple is springtime. Spring is an affordable, comfortable, and fun time to experience everything the city has to offer. In comparison to winter and summer, spring is ideal.*

#### Keywords

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

**Note:** These are your own ideas. There are no correct answers. Compare your word choices with a partner's.

### 4. End on a High Note

Just as you started your essay with a hook, you need to close your essay on a high note.

Is there further research that can be done? Is there hope for a better future? What can be said about the topic to leave the reader feeling interested and positive?

Every reader likes a happy ending!

#### TASK 4

Read the following unfinished conclusion. Think of a final sentence to include to end this essay on a high note.

*Like so many other artists, author F. Scott Fitzgerald was inspired by the city of New York. "The city seen from the Queensboro Bridge is always the city seen for the first time, in its first wild promise of all the mystery and beauty in the world." New York City is unquestionably one of the top destinations for travelers. While it has beauty and charm to offer in all seasons, there is no better time to experience New York than springtime. As has been noted, you can tour the Big Apple on foot when the weather is comfortable and the markets are open for business. Above all, you can enjoy everything the city has to offer without breaking the bank.*

## Closing Remarks – Useful Phrases

When ending a speech, many people use statements such as “**in summary**,” “**in conclusion**,” or “**to finish off**.” These markers indicate to the audience that the speech is coming to a close. In writing, these closing remarks may seem a bit weak. In most cases, a reader can plainly see that the writing is coming to an end. You can complete your thoughts without warning the reader that this is your final paragraph. Here are a few useful expressions to use in a conclusion.

### 1. Restating

- it has been demonstrated
- as mentioned
- as has been noted
- given that
- granted that
- again
- in short

### 2. Emphasizing

- most importantly
- it is clear that
- clearly
- namely
- notably
- the fact that
- above all
- all in all
- indeed
- unquestionably
- the most compelling evidence
- in particular

### 3. Wrapping Up

- therefore
- consequently
- hence
- thus
- by all counts
- by and large
- it is no wonder that
- with this in mind
- on the positive side
- provided that
- since
- because
- due to
- accordingly
- all things considered

**Note:** *Some teachers may ask you to use traditional closing remarks in your conclusion, such as “in conclusion,” “in summary,” “in closing,” “finally,” etc. Other teachers will ask you to avoid them as well as other transitional phrases like “as mentioned,” which they may feel to be weak or cliché.*

# A Sample Concluding Paragraph

## ESSAY TITLE: Springtime in the Big Apple

*Like so many other artists, author F. Scott Fitzgerald was inspired by the city of New York: "The city seen from the Queensboro Bridge is always the city seen for the first time, in its first wild promise of all the mystery and beauty in the world." New York City is unquestionably one of the top destinations for travelers. While it has beauty and charm to offer in all seasons, there is no better time to experience New York than springtime. As has been noted, you can tour the Big Apple on foot when the weather is comfortable and the markets are open for business. Above all, you can enjoy everything the city has to offer without breaking the bank. You'll need comfortable shoes and a camera for this memorable trip!*

Find the writer's rephrased **thesis statement** (the main point of the essay) and write it in the space below:

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# My Concluding Paragraph

## TASK 5

Write your own concluding paragraph. Make sure to leave a lasting impression.

Use a topic from an outline you wrote in a previous lesson, or write about a different city that you think people should visit during a certain season. Imagine the rest of the essay has already been written.

Alternatively, imagine that you have already written a full essay about a memorable moment or person from your childhood. Use the writing you worked on in the warm-up as your guide. Be sure to have a thesis in mind.

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## Leaving a Final Impression

Discuss the following questions with a partner or a small group.

1. What do readers do after they finish reading a piece of text?
2. What makes you decide to share a piece of writing with others?
3. What words can you think of to describe a piece of writing that you enjoyed reading? What words can be used to describe a piece of writing that you didn't enjoy?

## Comprehension Check-In

Work with a partner and answer the following questions based on the lesson so far.

1. What is the main goal of a concluding paragraph?
2. What should you do with your thesis statement in your conclusion?
3. Why is it unnecessary to write the phrase "in conclusion" in your concluding paragraph?
4. What did you learn about happy endings?
5. How can you help a reader feel like he has come full circle?

## Writing Challenge

Write a Dos and Don'ts list about essay writing based on everything you have learned so far! You can use the checklists from ESL Library's Essay Writing lessons to help you.

### For example:

*Do* choose a topic you are interested in.  
*Don't* overuse transitional phrases.

### TASK 6

Double-check that the conclusion you wrote in **Task 5** will leave a good final impression on your reader. Then share your conclusion with a classmate (or your teacher). Ask your reader to tell you what the essay was about. (They can imagine they've read the whole essay.) Did they enjoy reading it? Will it be memorable? Why or why not?

## A Checklist

### BEFORE HANDING IN YOUR COMPLETED ESSAY

- Did I rephrase my thesis statement in a fresh way in my conclusion?
- Did I use transitional phrases without sounding too cliché?
- Did I use keywords from my introduction in my conclusion?
- Did I wrap up my essay in a memorable way?
- Did I check my spelling?
- Did I check my capitalization, punctuation, and spacing?
- Did I have a friend proofread my essay?
- Did I write my name on my paper?

### Tip:

When making a Dos and Don'ts list, always follow *Do* or *Don't* with a base verb.

## Teachers' Answer Key

### NOTE:

We recommend using ESL Library's entire essay series. *How to Brainstorm*, *How to Write an Outline*, *How to Write an Introductory Paragraph*, and *How to Write Body Paragraphs* come before this lesson. This is a suggestion, not a prerequisite.

### LESSON DESCRIPTION:

In this lesson, students learn tips for writing concluding paragraphs. Students view a sample conclusion and practice their own paragraphs. They also talk about leaving lasting impressions.

**LEVEL:** Intermediate–Advanced

**TIME:** 1.5–2 hours

**TAGS:** writing, essay, conclusion, summarize paragraph, concluding paragraph

### Lesson Objective

Review the lesson objective with your students.

### Writing Warm-Up

Give your students some time to do a bit of writing on the topic provided (memorable moments). Remind them that this is free writing. They will not have to show anyone the writing, though you will discuss the content after. Discuss the follow-up questions in pairs or as a class.

### Vocabulary Preview

Print copies of page 9 and cut out the strips, or have students do the matching exercise provided on page 1.

- |      |      |      |      |       |
|------|------|------|------|-------|
| 1. b | 3. f | 5. a | 7. c | 9. i  |
| 2. e | 4. g | 6. h | 8. j | 10. d |

### Elements of a Strong Conclusion

Review these tips and give your students time to complete Tasks 1–4. Answers will vary.

#### Task 3

Suggested keywords: *picture, season, affordable, comfortable, Big Apple* (answers may vary).

#### Task 4

Example: *You'll need comfortable shoes and a camera for this memorable trip!*

### Closing Remarks

Encourage your students to keep this page handy as a reference page for any type of academic writing.

### A Sample Concluding Paragraph

Remind students of the original thesis statement (from page 2, Task 1): The best time to visit New York City is springtime.

Rephrased thesis statement:

*While it has beauty and charm to offer in all seasons, there is no better time to experience New York than springtime.*

### My Concluding Paragraph

Give students time to work on their own draft of a concluding paragraph, or assign this task for homework. You may want to mention that this writing will be shared with a classmate. If your students haven't written an outline before, you may want to skip this task and do it after they've written an outline.

*(continued on the next page...)*

## Teachers' Answer Key cont.

### Leaving a Final Impression

Give your students some time to discuss these questions in pairs or groups, or discuss the questions together as a class. Then put students in pairs for Task 6.

### Comprehension Check-In

1. The main goal of a concluding paragraph is to remind a reader about what you have written.
2. Your thesis statement should be rephrased in a fresh way in the conclusion.
3. It's unnecessary to use expressions like "in conclusion" in your concluding paragraph because the reader can already see that a piece is coming to an end.
4. Readers like happy endings.  
It's good to end an essay on a high note.
5. You can help a reader feel like he has come full circle by using keywords or ideas from your introduction.

### Writing Challenge

It is always helpful when teachers take part in the writing assignments. Why not work on your own Dos and Don'ts list as your students are working on theirs? You can add your own personal views about essay writing to extend what your students have already learned. Post your list in the classroom.

#### SPELLING NOTE:

This lesson shows the American spelling of the words *Emphasize*, *Travelers*, and *Practice*. Most other English-speaking countries spell these words this way: *Emphasise*, *Travellers*, and *Practise* (when used as a verb; *Practice* when used as a noun). Make it a challenge for your students to find these words in the lesson and see if they know the alternate spellings.



## Extra Vocabulary Practice (Optional)

Write definitions in your own words. Cut up these vocabulary strips.  
Challenge a partner to match the vocabulary to your definition.

**a lasting impression**

**sum up**

**in touch**

**concise**

**rephrase**

**fresh**

**a high note**

**come full circle**

**compelling**

**cliché**