

Handout Number 28

THE CONCLUSION OF AN ESSAY

A conclusion signals the end of the essay and leaves the reader with a final thought. As with the introduction, you may wish to revise and rewrite the conclusion once you have completed your essay. Be certain your conclusion flows logically from the body of the essay.

Like introductions, conclusions can take many forms, and the right one for your essay depends on how you wish to complete your paper—with what thought you wish to leave the reader. However, never conclude your paper with "As I said in the beginning," and try to avoid the overused "In conclusion" or "In summary." Don't end by saying you are going to end; just end!

Here are three ways to conclude an essay.

- 1. End with a call to action.** The call to action says that in view of the facts and ideas presented in this essay, the reader should *do something*.

Single-gender schools work. As we have seen, boys-only and girls-only middle and high schools help steer young people toward academic achievement and higher self-esteem. Showing off for the opposite sex, dating too early, and, especially in the case of girls, failing to raise their hands for fear of outshining the boys, are problems avoided altogether in single-gender environments. Parents and concerned citizens must contact their representatives and school boards to demand the option of single-gender schools. We owe it to our children to fight for the schools that truly serve them.

« What does the writer want the reader to do?

- 2. End with a final point.** The final point can tie together all the other ideas in the essay; it provides the reader with the sense that the entire essay has been leading up to this one final point.

Some estimate that millions of Earth-like planets may be in our Milky Way galaxy alone. The Milky Way is just one of about 100 billion galaxies in the universe. So chances are, plenty of not-too-big, not-too-small, not-too-hot, not-too-cold planets are out there, with water and sunshine—and, perhaps, life.

—Kathy Wollard, "Millions of Unseen Planets
May Hide in Galaxies," *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*

- With what final point does Wollard end her article?

3. End with a question. By ending with a question, you leave the reader with a final problem that you wish him or her to think about.

Yes, it is embarrassing to speak with our children about sex. We will feel awkward not knowing what to say, stymied as they resist the discussion. However, knowing the pressures that kids today face, the terrible examples bombarding them from popular culture, and the real threat of diseases, can we afford not to?

—Amelia Garcia (Student), "Talking to Kids about Sex"

What problem does the writer's final question point to?

Reference:

Fawcett, S. (2007) *Evergreen: A Guide to Writing with Readings*, (8th ed). Houghton and Mufflin.

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