

Strategies for an Effective Conclusion

ANSWER THE "SO WHAT?" QUESTION

Looking at your main arguments, ask yourself, "So what?" "Why should someone care about these ideas?" "What is the bigger picture?" Use those answers to explain the significance or purpose of your essay.

- *My paper's purpose is to analyze how Nazi Germany used the media to spread propaganda and influence people's perceptions and beliefs.*

So what? *Well, it's important because the masses easily and quickly bought into the propaganda because it contained emotional appeals they wanted to hear.*

Why does that matter now? *Well, because today we are bombarded by media that uses the same tactics of appealing to our emotions and what we want, instead of appealing to us to think logically about a topic. We need to be careful to analyze how the media today is influencing us to think and feel.*

WHAT ARE THE BROADER IMPLICATIONS?

Indicate how the findings in your paper have wider applications or have influenced other areas or people.

- Your paper about the book *The Hobbit* could end by pointing out how Tolkien's creative world inspired many later writers and led to the creation of the now vastly popular genre, fantasy.

RETURN TO A THEME/STORY/ANECDOTE FROM THE INTRO

If you begin the paper by describing a scenario, you can end with the same scenario as proof that your essay is helpful in creating a new understanding.

- Your paper's introduction begins with a story about a car accident caused by drunk driving, and your conclusion goes back to the same story and the consequences the car accident had on the people's lives to further show how dangerous drunk driving is.

PROPOSE A SOLUTION OR FURTHER STUDY

If your paper argues that a certain thing causes a problem or traces the history of that problem, ending with an idea for a solution demonstrates you have thought critically about that problem.

- Your paper argues that plastic water bottles are bad for health. In your conclusion you offer up a possible solution to the problem, or you suggest new questions that need further research to understand the topic better.

PULL IT ALL TOGETHER

Show your reader how all the individual points you made fit together as a whole. What is the big picture?