

Writing a conclusion

- 1 Begin the conclusion by writing a summary of your paper or report.
- 2 When writing the summary, be very selective. Focus on the main story.
- 3 Check that your summary is consistent with your introduction, in terms both of (a) logic and (b) language.
- 4 Next, write a statement of limitations. Every study is limited in some way: explain in what ways yours is limited. Aim to show that you are scrupulous and rigorous in your thinking.
- 5 Then provide an outline of the implications of your study. Consider such questions as:
How should people think differently as a result of your study?
What should people do (differently) as a result of your study?
How has your study changed the way we look at previous research?
What's the next step? What unanswered questions remain?
What further research becomes possible or necessary as a result of your study?
- 6 Remember:
 - conclusion \neq summary
 - conclusion $>$ summary
 - conclusion = summary + limitations + implications.

This resource is published as the third in the Writing Protocols series.

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Resources

The Writer's Handbook, published online by The Writing Center at the University of Wisconsin-Madison includes a useful section on writing conclusions: www.writing.wisc.edu

There are posts by Professor Pat Thomson on conclusions in (a) journal papers and (b) theses on her blog *patter*: patthomson.wordpress.com

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