

Writing a Conclusion

The purpose of a conclusion is to summarise the main points of your essay. It is your last opportunity to bring together what you have been saying, and to make your opinion, and your understanding of the topic, very clear to your examiner. For this reason, it is a crucial component of your essay and its importance should not be overlooked!

A conclusion should always:

- Highlight the key argument presented in the essay.
- Summarise the answer to the essay question, as signalled in the introduction.
- Refer back to the essay question to show that it has been answered.
- Reinforce the main theme of the essay, which has been established in the introduction.

A conclusion should never:

- Bring in new information or topics that have not been discussed in the body of the essay.
- As a general rule, avoid using in-text references in a conclusion. Like the introduction, the conclusion should confirm YOUR understanding of, and approach to, the essay topic.



- When writing your conclusion, copy and paste your introduction at the bottom of your document and use it as a framework. Remember, the purpose of the conclusion is to restate the goal, and the outcome of the essay. Having your introduction at hand will enable you to do this more easily. It will also help to remind you of the central focus of the essay, and of the key words that you should be integrating into your conclusion to remind to the examiner that you have answered the question!
- Remember to include the key words from the question, particularly in the final sentence of your conclusion!

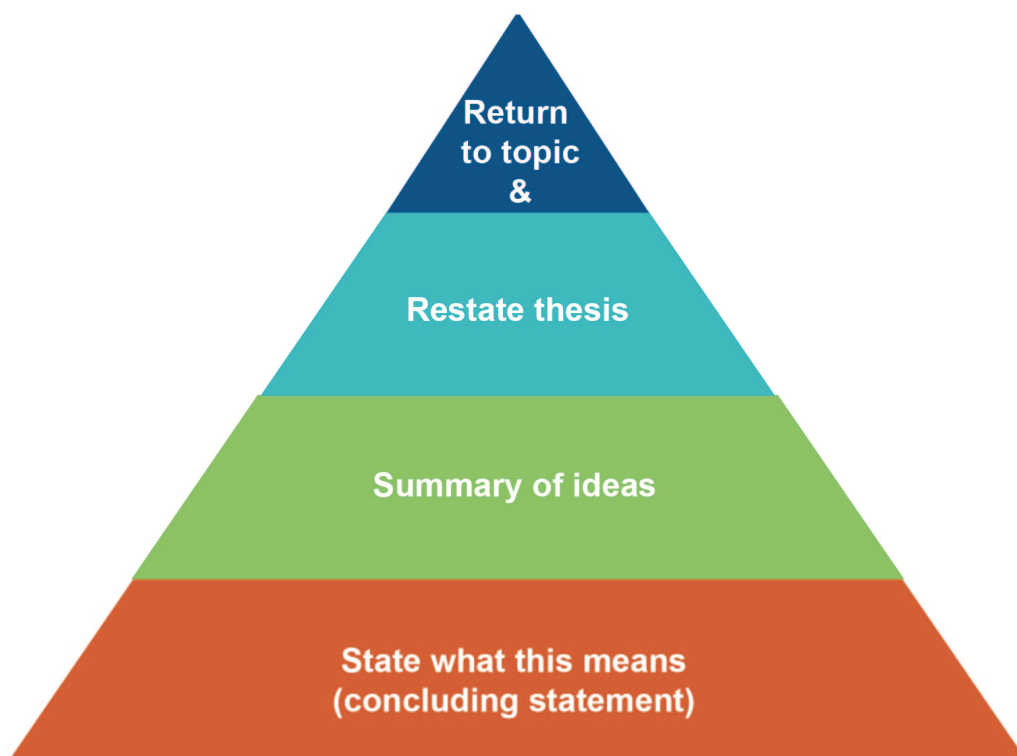


Useful phrases for starting a conclusion:

- In conclusion...
- As we have seen...
- In summary...
- In short...
- It has been shown that...

Structuring a Conclusion:

A conclusion is like an inverted introduction. Compare this diagram with the introduction diagram on page 11.



Example 1:

Technology has changed the role of the HR professional,	RETURN TO TOPIC
yet given its complexities and limitations, it is not foreseeable that the computer will entirely replace the human element in the design, delivery and evaluation of training. The HR professional is needed	RESTATE THESIS
to ensure that online courses are aligned to organisational goals and individual needs. Software programs cannot adequately implement quality teaching and learning principles, such as assessing a learner's need for practice opportunities, or providing feedback that is relevant to the individual. Consequently, the most successful approaches to using technology have blended self-paced e-learning with traditional face-to-face instruction.	SUMMARY OF IDEAS DISCUSSED
Online learning raises more questions than solutions, and the HR professional will bring the necessary human element and organisational perspective to the discussion.	CONCLUDING STATEMENT [restating thesis]

(Adapted from McNeil, 2006)

Example 2:

Significant social exclusion is experienced by ATSI students, as evidenced by the academic achievement gaps between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students.	RETURN TO TOPIC
Efforts are being made to reduce this gap , and although such aims are often regarded as unachievable, they highlight a necessary move towards a more inclusive education system.	RESTATE THESIS
[1] Recent changes to the curriculum incorporate both Aboriginal perspective and Aboriginal content to NSW syllabuses. [2] Similarly, several pedagogical frameworks have been developed to facilitate more effective teaching of ATSI students. While these strategies are still in the developmental process, they articulate	SUMMARY OF IDEAS DISCUSSED
a contemporary desire for the education system to support the diverse and complex educational needs of ATSI students.	CONCLUDING STATEMENT [restating thesis]

Adapted from actual student work. Permission to reproduce this work, for this purpose, was received from the student.

References

McNeil, K. (2006). *Newcastle Graduate School of Business: Student manual 2006*. Newcastle: University of Newcastle.

Planning a Conclusion:

COMPONENT	
Restate thesis/main idea of essay	In conclusion...
Summary of ideas discussed (one idea per paragraph)	This is because...
Concluding statement (using key words from question)	Therefore...