

EXPERIMENT WITH ESSAY CONCLUSIONS

“The end must connect with the opening. What has been promised must have been delivered. Read the opening over to see what closing it implies.”

—Donald Murray

Some Conclusions to Try

- **Admonition or instruction:** what the reader can do about the issue
- **Prediction:** an insight into how the future might be different, better, or worse
- **Strong, punched statement:** perhaps a one-sentence paragraph
- **Anecdote:** a brief story that reiterates the essence of the issue or situation
- **Pointed question:** leaves the reader thinking
- **Echo:** circles back to the lead

A Conclusion to Avoid

“Only rarely in effective writing is the closing a formal summary in which the writer repeats . . . what has already been said.”

—Donald Murray

EXAMPLES OF ESSAY CONCLUSIONS

ADMONITION OR INSTRUCTION

Colby:

If we succeed in leveling out the capitalistic imperfections, our whole society will be rewarded. Fight back.

Peter:

If you are a teacher who has students who don't like to read, give them access to good books and time to read and talk about them. Don't assign books, and never give prizes for reading.

PREDICTION

Anne:

Girls today can help achieve these important goals by taking a positive attitude toward their body image and being in control of their bodies, taking on leadership roles in the classroom and beyond, becoming active in the fight against sexism by objecting when they hear or are the subjects of sexist remarks or behavior, and setting higher education and career goals. Most importantly, girls can promote feminism by being who they want to be, not who the culture tells them they must be. Feminism is a philosophy that's not extreme, but fair. I hope that by opening a dialogue with my peers I can broaden their ways of thinking about the other half of the human race.

Erin:

I believe to ensure that an atomic bomb will never be dropped again there is only one solution: education. Children need to be educated about the effects of nuclear and atomic weapons, and we need to be taught about what happened at Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The children of today will be the adults of tomorrow, and maybe, if we know enough about nuclear warfare and the missile treaties the U.S. needs to make and keep with other countries, we can prevent it from ever happening again.

STRONG, PUNCHED STATEMENT

Jack:

And, finally, insist on and tell the truth about cigarettes: what they do to your body and your life, and how addictive smoking is.

ANECDOTE

Marcia:

So remember: if your kid comes home with a banned classic like *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* or *Lord of the Flies*, consider yourself lucky that your child got to read at least one great novel before someone decides that he or she should be denied the right to read.

POINTED QUESTION

Emily:

There aren't many ways to make going to Hoyts cheaper, but to cut the cost, movie-goers can stick to matinees and resist buying anything to eat or drink. Waiting for a film to be released on video and renting videos are also cheaper. If everyone started taking small steps like these, monopolies like Hoyts would start losing their power and begin to rethink their prices. And maybe families could enjoy a Saturday night together at the movies. Wouldn't that be a welcome change?

ECHO

Jed:

Bottom line, beef is not as bad as some people claim. Eaten smartly, it's actually good for you. So go grocery shopping with confidence, buy and eat that lean steak, and be healthier for it.

SOME TRANSITIONAL WORDS AND PHRASES FOR ESSAYS

According to	Meanwhile
After	Most important
Again	Next
Although	Nonetheless
And	Now
Another	Of course
As soon as	Oh, sure (Dave Barry)
As a (girl, etc.)	On the one hand
At the same time	On the other side
At this point	Or consider
But	Perhaps
Finally	Questions:
For years/months	When . . . ?
Fortunately	How . . . ?
However	Where . . . ?
Immediately	So
In any case	Somehow
In other words	Sometimes
In short	Soon
In the meantime	Still
It's obvious/clear that	Then
Just consider	This
Maybe	When