

# The Writing Center

## DLA: Conclusions



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Student Name:

### Important Note

To get completion credit for this DLA, make sure you complete all the required activities. If you'd like help while working on a specific DLA, you can meet with a specialist at the Writing Center. Keep in mind that you might need to schedule a second appointment to review your work, check your understanding, and get your completion credit. You can only review **ONE** DLA per appointment. (Check the last section of this DLA for information on making your appointment and receiving completion credit for your work).

### Activities (approximately 1 hour)

Read the information, complete the activities that follow, and be prepared to discuss your answers when you meet with a tutor.

### Understanding the Conclusion Paragraph

Writing the concluding paragraph is often one of the trickiest parts of writing an essay. It provides a final impression of the essay; however, it can vary based on several factors: the topic of the essay and the techniques used in the introduction of the essay.

Writers have several jobs to do in the conclusion:

- briefly recap the main point of the essay
- express a significance to the point of the essay
- bring the essay to an effective close

Your conclusion is your opportunity to wrap up your essay in a tidy package and bring it home for your reader. After transitioning from your final body paragraph, it is a good idea to echo what you have said in your **thesis statement** in order to suggest to your reader that you have accomplished what you set out to accomplish. Take a moment to judge this for yourself. Reread your thesis. If you find that your thesis statement now sounds hollow or irrelevant—that you haven't done what you set out to do—then you need either to revise your argument or to redefine your thesis statement. **Do not, in any case, simply restate your thesis statement in your final paragraph**, as that would be redundant. Having read your essay, we should understand this main thought with fresh and deeper understanding, and your conclusion wants to reflect what we have learned.

When writing your conclusion, keep this in mind:

- The conclusion should contain a definite, positive statement or call to action, but the statement needs to be based on what has been provided in the essay.
- The conclusion is no place to bring up new ideas. If you come up with something brilliant, find a place for it in the body of your essay. If it doesn't fit, leave it out.
- Never apologize for or otherwise undercut the argument you've made or leave your readers with the sense that "this is just little ol' me talking."
- Avoid beginning the conclusion with "In conclusion."

## **Conclusion Techniques:**

Here is a brief list of techniques you can use to close your essay. Do not use all techniques in the conclusion. It is recommended that you use one or two that are closely related.

- Include a brief summary of the paper's main points
- Ask a provocative question
- Use a quotation
- Evoke a vivid image
- Call for some sort of action
- End with a warning
- Universalize (compare to other situations)
- Suggest results or consequences
- Projection of the future

## **Conclusion Tasks:**

- The conclusion is your last chance to say something important to your readers, and can be used for some, or all, of the following tasks. Emphasizing the *purpose* and *importance* of your essay
- Explaining the *significance* or *consequences* of your findings
- Indicating the wider applications of the *method* developed in your essay
- Establishing your essay as the *basis* for further investigation
- To show *other directions of inquiry*

## **An Outline of a Conclusion:**

- A. Transition sentence from last body paragraph
- B. Sentences explaining how the paper has fit together and leads to a stronger, more emphatic and more detailed version of your thesis
- C. Discussion of implications for further research (or another technique)
  - a. Other areas that can use the same method
  - b. How your findings change the readers' understanding of the topic
  - c. Discussion of areas in need of more detailed investigation
- D. Final words
  - a. Why the essay was important or interesting
  - b. Any other areas in which your essay has significance: ethics, practical applications, politics, etc.

## **Sample Conclusions:**

**Technique:** Projection of the Future

**Task:** Explain the Significance of Your Findings

They say nothing lives forever. They say that what goes up must come down. They say that all empires come to an end. For centuries boxing ruled supreme as the king of combat sports, but now it's time to pass the torch. Whether fans like it or not, mixed martial arts is here to stay. Every day the sport gains more and more popularity, and every day the sport gains more criticism. We can only assume that at the fast pace it is growing, within a couple of years this sport will be mainstream and accepted like any other sport out there.

**Technique:** Quotation and an Interesting Fact

**Task:** Explain the Significance of Your Findings

Living in a country where the only Muslim images we are subjected to are those of gun-toting terrorists in movies and on the news, *Control Room* comes as a long-awaited breath of fresh air. But what really clenched this film's position in the repertoire of my favorite documentaries doesn't happen in the film at all. After *Control Room* was released, Lt. Rushing quit a fourteen-year run with the Marines after being reprimanded by them for portraying Al Jazeera in a positive light. After leaving, remarkably, Lt. Rushing took a position with Al Jazeera and "became one of the new faces of Al Jazeera International" (Shulman). Ultimately, this film (both on the screen and behind the scenes) has left me with an uplifted feeling and a restored faith in humanity.

**Technique:** Interesting Fact and a Provocative Question

**Task:** Emphasize the Purpose and Importance of Your Essay

Although fast food may seem convenient for all the busy-goers, the side effects of frequent fast-food consumption are harmful to our bodies in the long-run. It may seem worth the minimal money that was spent because it saved time shopping for groceries and time spent cooking, but, as *Washington Post* broke it down, for every dollar that McDonald large fries cost, we are paying one dollar to disintegrate our body with 228 calories, and for every dollar that Burger King Double Whopper with cheese, we are paying one dollar to deteriorate our body with 207 calories. It's good to question yourself now. Why are we paying fast food restaurants for obesity, heart disease, and diabetes?

## Activities

Check off each box once you have completed the activity.

### 1. Conclusions Review

What are TWO things you should generally avoid in a conclusion?

### 2. Identify Conclusion Techniques

Read the following article and then answer the questions that follow.

#### **Sticks and Stones and Sports Team Names**

by Richard Estrada

When I was a kid living in Baltimore in the late 1950s, there was only one professional sports team worth following. Anyone who ever saw the movie *Diner* knows which one it was. Back when we liked Ike, the Colts were the gods of the gridiron and Memorial Stadium was their Mount Olympus.

Ah, yes: The Colts. The Lions. Da Bears. Back when defensive tackle Big Daddy Lipscomb was letting running backs know exactly what time it was, a young fan could easily forget that in a game where men were men, the teams they played on were not invariably named after animals. Among others, the Packers, the Steelers and the distant 49ers were cases in point. But in the roll call of pro teams, one name in particular always discomfited me: the Washington Redskins. Still, however willing I may have been to go along with the name as a kid, as an adult I have concluded that using an ethnic group essentially as a sports mascot is wrong.

The Redskins and the Kansas City Chiefs, along with baseball teams like the Atlanta Braves and the Cleveland Indians, should find other names that avoid highlighting ethnicity.

By no means were such names originally meant to disparage Native Americans. The noble symbols of the Redskins or college football's Florida State Seminoles or the Illinois Illini are meant to be strong and proud. Yet, ultimately, the practice of using a people as mascots is dehumanizing. It sets them apart from the rest of society. It promotes the politics of racial aggrievement at a moment when our storehouse is running over with it.

The World Series between the Cleveland Indians and the Atlanta Braves re-ignited the debate. In the chill night air of October, tomahawk chops and war chants suddenly became far more familiar to millions of fans, along with the ridiculous and offensive cartoon logo of Cleveland's "Chief Wahoo."

The defenders of team names that use variations on the Indian theme argue that tradition should not be sacrificed at the altar of political correctness. In truth, the nation's No. 1 P.C. [politically correct] school, Stanford University, helped matters some when it changed its team nickname from "the Indians" to "the Cardinals." To be sure, Stanford did the right thing, but the school's status as P.C. without peer tainted the decision for those who still need to do the right thing.

Another argument is that ethnic group leaders are too inclined to cry wolf in alleging racial insensitivity. Often, this is the case. But no one should overlook genuine cases of political insensitivity in an attempt to avoid accusations of hypersensitivity and political correctness.

The real world is different from the world of sports entertainment. I recently heard a father who happened to be a Native American complain on the radio that his child was being pressured into participating in celebrations of Braves baseball. At his kid's school, certain days are set aside on which all children are told to dress in Indian garb and celebrate with tomahawk chops and the like.

That father should be forgiven for not wanting his family to serve as somebody's mascot. The desire to avoid ridicule is legitimate and understandable. Nobody likes to be trivialized or deprived of their dignity. This has nothing to do with political correctness and the provocations of militant leaders.

Against this backdrop, the decision by newspapers in Minneapolis, Seattle and Portland to ban references to Native American nicknames is more reasonable than some might think.

What makes naming teams after ethnic groups, particularly minorities, reprehensible is that politically impotent groups continue to be targeted, while politically powerful ones who bite back are left alone. How long does anyone think the name "Washington Blackskins" would last? Or how about "the New York Jews"?

With no fewer than 10 Latino ballplayers on the Cleveland Indian's roster, the team could change its name to "the Banditos." The trouble is, they would be missing the point: Latinos would correctly object to that stereotype, just as they rightly protested against Frito-Lay's use of the "Frito-Bandito" character years ago.

It seems to me that what Native Americans are saying is that what would be intolerable for Jews, blacks, Latinos and others is no less offensive to them. Theirs is a request not only for dignified treatment, but for fair treatment as well. For America to ignore the complaints of a numerically small segment of the population because it is small is neither dignified nor fair.

Identify two good aspects of the conclusion, based on the specific techniques and tasks mentioned above, and write them below.

1.

2.

### □ 3. Write a Concluding Paragraph

Read the following article. The conclusion is missing.

#### **Not Too Rich or Too Thin**

by Lisa Takeuchi Cullen

One of the first things that strike foreigners visiting the United States is that the rich tend to be skinny and the poor fat. Studies bear this out. The less money you have in America, the likelier you are to be overweight. One in 4 adults below the poverty level is obese, compared with 1 in 6 in households with an income of \$67,000 or more. For minorities, poverty has an even heavier effect: Obesity strikes one in three poor African Americans.

On the surface, this makes little sense. If the poor must struggle to buy groceries, how can they pack away enough to gain all that weight? The assumption used to be that the poor were making bad food and lifestyle choices—Krispy Kremes instead of crispy greens. But now researchers have begun to suspect that the blame lies elsewhere.

The cost of food—quality food—is perhaps the best place to start. Calorically speaking, the best bang for the buck tends to be packed with sugar, fat, and refined grains (think cookies and candy bars). In general, processed foods hog over larger portions of all Americans' diets—one reason we spend just a tenth of our incomes on food today, compared with a fifth in 1950. But a pound of lean steak costs a lot more than a pound of hot dogs. "The stomach is a dumb organ," says J. Larry Brown, director of the Center on Hunger and Poverty in Waltham, Massachusetts. "It doesn't know anything about quality. It knows only when it's full."

Processed foods aren't just cheap, tasty, and filling. They're also more accessible. One study found that 28 percent of Americans live in what nutritionists call "food deserts," places where big supermarkets are at least ten miles, or a twenty-minute drive, away. People who live in these places wind up buying much of their daily groceries from convenience stores or gas stations, where they can find Chef Boyardee but not baby carrots. Some communities are trying to remedy this. Philadelphia, for instance, recently announced a \$100 million effort to open ten supermarkets in urban neighborhoods. But for much of the country, says Troy Blanchard, a sociology professor at Mississippi State University who studies this issue, "you have people who are literally distanced out of healthy diets."

Children of the poor face especially steep odds in fighting obesity. The cash-strapped schools many of them attend are more likely than others to cut physical-education classes and strike franchise deals with snack-food and beverage makers. After school, working parents would rather their kids stay inside watching TV than play outside in unsafe streets. Those hours in front of the tube, meanwhile, feed them a diet of ads heavy on sugary cereals and greasy burgers. No wonder obese adolescents are twice as likely to come from low-income families....

In the space below, write a concluding paragraph for this essay that uses some of the techniques and tasks mentioned above.

## **Choose 4a or 4b Below**

### **4a. Revise Your Own Writing**

Locate an essay you have previously written or one you are presently working on and rewrite the conclusion using a concluding technique you did not originally employ. Bring your essay with the revised conclusion to the tutoring session.

**If you do not have your own essay to work with, please complete the supplemental activity below (4b).**

### **4b. Analyze a Concluding Paragraph**

In a newspaper or magazine or anything written, find a piece of writing that has a strong introduction and a strong conclusion. Answer the questions that follow.

1. What method of conclusion is used?

2. What does the conclusion do? Restate the main idea? Sum up the support? Make a further observation? Refer back to a technique used in the introduction?

## **5. Review the DLA/Receive Completion Credit**

1. Go to [EAB Navigate](#) and make an appointment (online or in-person).
2. Attend your session and be prepared to explain your understanding of the information you've learned in the DLA. Consider the main concept you learned and how you might use this in your future assignments/classes.
3. If your professor asks you to provide proof, you can review the "appointment summary report" through EAB Navigate (app or desktop). You will find all Writing Center appointments under "appointment summary reports" (app or desktop). Look for the summary report for your DLA appointment. This is where your writing specialist will indicate the title of your DLA and state whether it is "completed" or "not completed." If it is marked as "not completed," book a follow up appointment to complete.

Note: Appointment summary reports are also sent weekly to your instructor on record. If there is an issue, please contact us at [writingcenter@mtsac.edu](mailto:writingcenter@mtsac.edu) or (909) 274-5325.

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