

# SSU Writing Center

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## Writing Strong Conclusions

You may have been told at some point that the “proper” way to conclude an essay is to summarize the points you’ve made. This kind of conclusion is indeed one commonly used strategy. However, it’s not a very imaginative or dynamic strategy, and experienced, creative writers allow themselves a wide variety of options, some of which are listed below.

An important point: Sometimes the conclusion to a given piece of writing is dictated by the genre within which you’re working. For instance, business letters very frequently conclude with a friendly reference to the writer’s hope for a mutually beneficial business relationship; scientific lab reports normally conclude with a “Discussion” portion which explores the significance of the study’s findings. It’s always OK to ask your teacher if he or she has expectations for how your paper will be formally arranged.

Try the following conclusion strategies to demonstrate your creativity and artfulness as a writer:

- Discuss implications of your argument; extend the context of your essay so as to show what your thesis implies for the broader context.
- Introduce a new but related point. Yes, it’s OK to bring up an entirely new issue, as long as that issue is intimately related and doesn’t run counter to your basic argument.
- Evaluate your essay. Mention a few other ways you might have approached the topic had you taken a different tack.
- Recall a point, issue, anecdote, question, problem, or dilemma you raised in your introduction. This strategy can give the reader a satisfying sense of completion and wholeness in the act of reading.
- Restate your thesis in a different way.
- Conclude with a vivid image or startling element--for instance, a quotation which sums up your points perfectly; a vivid image; an earnest call for action; or a pithy rhetorical question.

Choose among these or other options carefully. Each of these choices will leave your reader with a different sense of your paper as a whole. Decide upon a conclusion strategy that best fits with your purpose for writing the paper.