**Concluding Paragraphs**

Top of Form

Bottom of FormYour conclusion is your opportunity to wrap up your essay in a tidy package and bring it home for your reader. It is a good idea to recapitulate what you said in your [**Thesis Statement**](http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/composition/thesis.htm) in order to suggest to your reader that you have accomplished what you set out to accomplish. It is also important to judge for yourself that you have, in fact, done so. 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. Don't worry about that; it happens to writers all the time. They have argued themselves into a position that they might not have thought of when they began their writing. Writing, just as much as reading, is a process of self discovery. **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.

There are some cautions we want to keep in mind as we fashion our final utterance. First, we don't want to finish with a sentimental flourish that shows we're trying to do too much. It's probably enough that our essay on recycling will slow the growth of the landfill in Hartford's North Meadows. We don't need to claim that recycling our soda bottles is going to save the world for our children's children. (That may be true, in fact, but it's better to claim too little than too much; otherwise, our readers are going to be left with that feeling of "Who's he/she kidding?") The conclusion should contain a definite, positive statement or call to action, but that statement needs to be based on what we have provided in the essay.

Second, the conclusion is no place to bring up new ideas. If a brilliant idea tries to sneak into our final paragraph, we must pluck it out and let it have its own paragraph earlier in the essay. If it doesn't fit the structure or argument of the essay, we will leave it out altogether and let it have its own essay later on. The last thing we want in our conclusion is an excuse for our readers' minds wandering off into some new field. Allowing a peer editor or friend to reread our essay before we hand it in is one way to check this impulse before it ruins our good intentions and hard work.

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." Leave your readers with the sense that they've been in the company of someone who knows what he or she is doing. Also, if you promised in the introduction that you were going to cover four points and you covered only two (because you couldn't find enough information or you took too long with the first two or you got tired), don't try to cram those last two points into your final paragraph. The "rush job" will be all too apparent. Instead, revise your introduction or take the time to do justice to these other points.