

Part VI: Writing your “Conclusion” Section

Writing a conclusion is the final part of the research paper, drawing everything together and tying it into your initial research. If you remember, a research paper starts with a broad look at the research and narrows down to the results, before the discussion opens it out again.

At the beginning of the research paper, you looked at all of the previous research and boiled it down into a research question. In the discussion, you assess how the results answer this question, and discuss its relevance to the existing knowledge in the field. When writing a conclusion, you should try to answer a few questions, as succinctly as possible. You will have already answered some of these in your discussion, but the key is to leave some questions that another researcher can expand upon for their research project.

Answer the following questions:

I. What Has Your Research Shown?

This is a very quick synopsis of the results and discussion. Don't go into too much detail about this. Anybody reading the conclusion has read the entire paper, so the conclusion merely acts as an aid to memory.

II. How Has It Added to What is Known About the Subject?

This is where you tie it in to the body of research discussed in the literature review. How did you expand our understanding of the topic? Even if you did not manage to reject the null, there is always a reason for this, and something has been learned.

III. Do your findings open up any suggestions for future research?

For a shorter paper, this is not always essential, but you can highlight any possible areas of interest and give some ideas for those following after you doing their own research on the topic.

IV. Are My Results of Any Use in the Real World?

Again, this is not always applicable, but you can suggest any practical uses for your findings. For example, if you uncovered a link between diet and the speed at which children learn, you could suggest a short plan for ensuring that children receive good nutrition.

Grading the Conclusion Section (obtained from the “Final Paper Rubric”)

1. *Draws a reasonable, general conclusion, avoids hyperbole, does not make too broad conclusions based on small data set, sample size, etc.*
2. *Identifies future questions that still need to be answered or investigated.*
3. *Identifies a creative and coherent long-term plan and broader implications.*