

## Writing a Conclusion

In first-year writing courses at IUSB, your writing assignments will challenge you to look at two or more readings and ask you to reflect on the authors' ideas. If you work through such an assignment with appropriate care and attention to detail, you will have written a paper with ideas more complex than can easily fit into the traditional five-paragraph theme that includes an opening, closing, and three supporting paragraphs. Rather than using your conclusion to give the last word on an issue or simply to drive home your main point once again, think of your concluding paragraph as an opening up rather than a closing down of the material. When you get to the end of your paper, instead of asking "What have I said?" which will lead you to a recap of your discussion, try to answer one or two of the following questions:

1. What have my readers learned beyond the information I gave them in the first paragraph?
2. What is the significance of my findings?
3. Why is this an important topic to write about?
4. What impact does this topic/discussion have on society? On me?
5. What new questions does this topic raise, perhaps for further inquiry?

Answers to these questions lend credibility to your ideas. Consequently, your readers will take you seriously, consider your ideas more thoughtfully, and will be provoked into new thinking. Your paper will be more interesting—more lively—and you will have succeeded in keeping the dialogue going between readers and writers, the cornerstone of university learning.