

Writing Conclusions for Advanced Placement English Language Essays

The following are all conclusions from papers that scored an 8 or 9 on the AP Language exam. Even though you have not seen the original question, an effective conclusion should make both the purpose and thesis of the essay clear.

A good conclusion should be the writer's final appeal. In a persuasive argument, the writer should end with a final rhetorical thrust, ending with a convincing idea designed to draw the reader to his side. In a rhetorical analysis, the writer should be with a holistic assessment of the author's impact on his or her audience (viz., what does the author want his or her audience to think or feel upon finishing the work?).

Something NOT to do in either case: Summarize.

Always end with something new (that is, something not said before). You can and should return to former ideas, but present them from a different angle. Perhaps show the combined effect of the writer's ideas in a rhetorical analysis. Or, in a persuasive argument, end with a convincing idea that follows from your previous points.

It doesn't matter what you do, so long as the paper ends on an emotional upswing in which your ideas are crystal clear and meaningful.

If you can.....

Try the following techniques at the end:

1. Dramatic sentences (e.g. one-word sentences or sentence fragments)
2. Parallel sentences or parallel elements
3. Rhetorical questions (i.e., questions with an obvious answer use to persuade the audience. For example: Do you want to fail, Johnny?)
4. A new specific illustration that captures a key idea.
5. Anaphora (or any type of intentional repetition). Anaphora is beginning a series of sentences with the exact same words (e.g., "I have a dream....")

The point: End with style and flair, if possible. Most of these techniques work best with persuasive arguments. Keep in mind that this is the English Language & Composition exam. Showing your skill at using advanced composition techniques will raise your score.

a way for people to reach out to ~~viewers~~ viewers

In contrast to Ehrenreich's assertion, characters on a TV show ~~to be~~ sometimes actually do act the way real people do, which could be much more frightening. Family Guy, a crude TV show, is almost a reflection on ~~real~~ a real person's behavior, though the animation makes it less noticeable.

Many people would rather enjoy watching different scenarios on television than ~~not~~ having real life portrayed because in actuality they may prevent people from actually doing events as the ones portrayed on TV. In conclusion, TV prevents viewers from making mistakes or doing dangerous actions that many of the TV characters do.

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Note the intriguing idea at the end: That television benefits us because it prevents us from making mistakes. This final rhetorical appeal caps the writer's disagreement with ideas presented by a man named Ehrenreich. KEY POINT: This writer ends with something new. A persuasive appeal that builds on ideas presented earlier.

Schools are there to teach students the ways to survive in a society and get along. The schools these days are getting stricter and stricter. ~~No~~ school hours are increasing, and students such as I are being confined longer and longer. ~~It is to~~ school should be a place where students want to go to be educated and develop their own thoughts. Not a place we feel we have to go in order to fit in. The feeling of being watched, controlled, and conforming isn't a feeling of nationalism or a feeling we'd want to have when asked why we defend our country.



Note the dramatic style of these closing lines. Consider using parallelism or dramatic sentence structures in your concluding paragraph. Such rhetorical “flair” stylistically enhances your ideas. It also demonstrates advanced compositional skill. (In this case, observe the dramatic sentence fragment, “Not a place...” and the parallelism of the following line.) I strongly recommend ending your paper with dramatic, rhetorical techniques, especially syntactical structures such as anaphora (lines with repeated opening words), parallelism, or fragments.

and much more.

In fiction, a character often ends a story realizing far more than he did when he began. The conflicts and resolutions he has been through have forced it on him. Character development is not merely a literary construct - it exists in life. We cannot live and we cannot grow without the realization that we are not living perfectly and that we have ideals to grow towards, and revealing these is the true value of adversity.

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This essay ends with reflection, capturing the idea that imperfection is a necessary part of life. This philosophical ending adds depth to an already fine paper. Note how the ideas presented are universal and apply to many aspects of life. We don't all think as deeply, but do recognize the importance of showing your understanding at the end.

out what was there ~~at~~ the whole time.

There are many times we don't see what is right in front of us. Edward O. Wilson takes the arguments of people-first and environmental advocates to the extreme, and puts them together to show the unproductive arguments and ~~the~~ deduction they share. He points out what was always there.

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Not an impressive conclusion. The writer essentially returns to the author's rhetorical purpose. However, this conclusion does bring the paper to finality. It is functional. It doesn't raise the score or quality, but neither does it do any harm. We are able to clearly see that the writer understood Wilson's purpose. Conclusions should also reveal a clear understanding of the subject being analyzed.

The majority of countries in the world today are not democracies. The people are very seldom asked for their opinion; on the contrary, they are usually forbade from expressing it. Unless ~~to~~ justice and ~~be~~ equality ~~are~~ insured ~~for~~ for all people in voting and governance, tyrannies and dictatorships will continue to thrive. Recently in Iraq, the ~~country's~~ ^{country's} first elections were ~~just~~ held. Despite the threats and fear of danger, a great number of people voted. They exercised their democratic right, a right they knew would prevent further terror and bloodshed. If all Americans did the same, the future of democracy would be assured well into the 21st century and beyond. #

Previous page: Nice concluding paragraph. The author brought in a new example (Iraqi voting) and connected it to the importance of voting in America. This new illustrative example strengthened the writer's final appeal. Remember: End with something new. In persuasive arguments, your paper should close with a final rhetorical appeal using something new.

of happiness within poverty.

Hazlitt's goal in this piece seems clear: to lay forth the horrors of living in poverty. By employing a non-stop, relentless string of misfortune in a continuous sentence structure, Hazlitt plays on the readers' heartstrings far more than enough to convince them of the importance of having money.

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Dull, dry conclusion, but it works. The writer reminds us of Hazlitt's rhetorical purpose and reiterates the primary strategies employed. The writer's language ("lay forth," "relentless string of misfortune," "readers' heartstrings") helps. Such conclusions are not recommended, but they work—in so far as they don't hurt your paper. If you must end quickly, do it this way.

describing.

Through these various techniques, Pizer is thus able to comment on both a specific phenomenon and its more general implications. Example, word choice and especially tone help reveal that she finds flaws in the American thought process, especially when it comes to the basis for the American bonds. She is able to get this message across not specifically through her words, but the implications that occur on a second level.

—H

Nothing exciting. But it works. (See the previous example.)

for equal rights.

The mastery of rhetorical strategies helps Stewart convey her position and effectively support her purpose in a call for equality. With a brilliant and passionate lecture, Stewart was amongst the leaders of her community that won the war for racial equality in America.

1

This is a rather poor conclusion. You might note that—so far in this file—few excite. There's a lesson there: Put your greatest energy into developing your body paragraphs. The conclusion need only be functional. Of course, in real writing, the conclusion carries far greater weight.

scouring out ~~holes~~...."

Artistically written and neatly organized, John Barry's explanation of the river and its complex mechanics draw in the reader and ~~create~~^{carry over} an amusement and curiosity. ~~Now~~ Now more knowledgeable and ~~strongly~~ positive the reader that help someone else to experience the Mississippi river as Barry knew it to be.

Ho-hum. Another one that merely works.

is in the faculty of wrongness.

But does this mean that the ~~every~~^{every} man in the world should immediately abandon his or her



standard of perfection to explore the unknown? No. To explore the unknown is to apply our ability to rationalize ~~it~~ and regulate it; it is ~~a~~ the error that must come to us, not us who must seek out the error. In the end, the "root nodules" of discovery rest in what we already have. Though we should realize that they are there, the strands of human investigation will never find them until they of their own volition choose to reveal themselves, and all of their encapsulated progress and wonders, to us.

Now here's a conclusion! Note the effective (stylistic) use of a rhetorical question. The writer ends with a thoughtful opinion, confidently presented. This conclusion comes from information presented previously but is "new" in that it had never been articulated before. The writer's style and vocabulary impresses.

The remaining conclusions are presented without comment. Though not all will impress, they do what a conclusion is supposed to do: Bring a paper to finality and address the main idea(s).

Without a conclusion, your paper is structurally flawed and will be marked down severely.

group conformity.

~~George F. Kennan~~ George F. Kennan was correct in this passage, and even though Americans have a lawful right to express themselves the oppress their own rights and conform America has become a breeding ground for conformity through education, politics, and media.

humful choices based on smooth advertising.

This article aims to raise awareness, give warning, and create humor about the often-misleading advertisement industry. Through its humor and clever diction, the onion is effective in its satirical, tongue-in-cheek tone.

the imporensheed of the world.

When directly observed, "Singer's Solution" is not only a naïve plan to undertake what millennia of human history has not helped, but also a misinterpretation of what causes human poverty and what can help to cure it. During World War II, Franklin Delano Roosevelt initiated government deficit spending, and the increase of production and jobs helped America out of the Great Depression. History is behind the critics of "Singer's solution", and realism also backs them up. The truth is that money spent on luxuries (or what some may call necessities) do more good than harm. They go towards assisting people; money spent on perfume goes to specialized workers who work at hard jobs for their

money, but money spent on what Singer may call "necessities", like clothing, goes towards large corporations which ~~exploit~~ exploit workers in sweatshops to mass-produce T-shirts. In the end, "Singer's Solution" is not only not a viable ~~solution~~ answer but aplan in which the efforts outweigh the benefits. (misconstrued)

is also an artist.

Essentially, Sontag is making a sweeping generalization about an art form that she ~~has~~ knows little about. She claims that documentary photography distorts "truth" and prevents understanding, while expressionistic photography - which she ignores - is even a distortion of "reality," and thus presumably an even greater distortion of truth and understanding. What Sontag does not understand is that there is more than one kind of truth, and there more than one way to get at it. Photography is one of those ways; sure it distorts - but then, doesn't everything? Especially words, Sontag's chosen medium?

* Sontag ^{also} ~~also~~ claims that photographs make the world seem more available than it is. The opposite is true. Photography confirms the limits of this world. Photographs prove that there was history, that the human eye sees better than the camera lens, that artifice in this world are finite. Pictures help us to see but do not replace reality.

IT IS TIME FOR SOCIETY TO ~~BREAK~~ BREAK ITS FETTERS AND OPEN ITS EYES TO A WORLD OF REALITY, NOT THE DARK ~~ALLEYS~~ ALLEYS OF PROPAGANDA AND FALSE FRIENDS. AS SONTAG WRITES, "NEEDING TO HAVE REALITY CONFIRMED AND EXPERIENCE ENHANCED BY PHOTOGRAPHS IS AN AESTHETIC CONSUMERISM TO WHICH EVERYONE IS NOW ADDICTED," FURTHER REALITY WILL NOT BE BACKED BY PHOTOGRAPHS, BECAUSE THEY ARE OPPOSITES. ONE MUST, INSTEAD, EXPERIENCE REALITY FOR HIMSELF, NOT THROUGH THE EYES OF A PHOTOGRAPHER.

a mere mortal could produce in her. She is it as if she has been impregnated by Zeus. It is as if she were. Today, only her Swan is an owl. Her description of nature bears resemblance to Gates's poem, though it is much more subtle. It is original too, in that she describes the encounter from the woman's view.

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Lewes' closing lines assure Peirce that the life of a married female writer is a happy one - using an allusion to ~~an~~ a character in one of her works. The entire letter operates on metaphor and paradox made interesting and relevant by Lewes' personal experience. Because of her experience, she speaks with authority; at the same time, however, she ~~can~~ points out the underlying similarities between her plight and Peirce's - offering exactly what Peirce needed, a dose of inspiration - something all writers could use.