

Writing the Conclusion Paragraph

Reviewing the claim/thesis.
Summarizing the topic points.
Making the structure complete.

Some general rules...

- The conclusion should be the same length and cover the same material as the introduction.
- You should never simply “copy” or too closely rephrase the introduction,
- You should, however, go back through all of your major points.

(continued)

- Think of the introduction and the conclusion as two halves of the same whole.
- When done properly, the introduction and the conclusion “bookend” the writer’s thinking in the essay.
- You never, never, never, never introduce new material in the conclusion!

Step one: Review the thesis.

- **In the introduction, the claim/thesis was the last sentence.**
- **Go back and review that thought.**
- **Ask yourself this question: Have you done all that was necessary to show with quotes and to explain your own thinking in responding to the essay prompt?**

Here is a thesis:

Cisneros' book emphasizes the ability of an individual to overcome great obstacles, and her first chapter is carefully constructed to show the connection between finding personal identity and happiness.

Step two: Review your topic sentences.

- If properly done, each topic sentence is a major sub-point of your claim/thesis.
- Look carefully at these sentences just after reviewing your claim/thesis.
- How do these major ideas support your claim/thesis?

Critical conclusions

Her book emphasizes the ability of an individual to overcome great obstacles, and her first chapter is carefully constructed to show the connection between finding personal identity and happiness.

This thesis may have then been followed by three topic sentences that looked like the following:

Critical conclusions

- Esperanza faces many challenges that Cisneros presents in the first chapter, but the greatest and most enduring is accepting Mango Street as a part of her identity.
- Cisneros uses the first chapter to introduce the idea of home because Esperanza will never discover her true identity until she learns to accept Mango Street.
- Esperanza discovers freedom and happiness as she comes to identify with Mango Street.

Remember...

- A conclusion should return to the main idea, your claim/thesis.
- It should also review quickly and without bringing in new material, your major points.
- It should clearly bring the structure of your essay to a stylish conclusion.

Critical conclusions

The House on Mango Street is a deceptively complex novel. Sandra Cisneros establishes many of the book's themes in the first chapter. The first chapter focuses on Esperanza's desire to have a home of which she can be proud. Her first chapter shows the reader how closely happiness is tied to personal identity. Eperanza struggles to find her identity over the course of the book, but discovers happiness when she embraces Mango Street as part of her identity.

Summary

- The conclusion matches the introduction in size and content.
- The conclusion revisits, briefly and without merely repeating, the claim/thesis.
- The conclusion will, with style and confidence, review the major points of evidence indicated by the topic sentences of the body paragraphs.