

WRITING RIGHT @ CGCC



CHANDLER-GILBERT
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Inside This Issue

- 2 Top Ten Excuses for Late Papers
- 2 Stump the Grammar Goddess
- 3 Ambiguous Newspaper Headlines
- 3 Top Ten Tips for Handling Finals
- 4 Workshop Highlights
- 4 Writing Center Summer Hours
- 4 Did You Know?

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Concluding Thoughts

by Veronica Pantoja

The perfect conclusion is just as important as the introduction (a topic tackled in Writing Right @ CGCC, Vol. 1, Issue 3), as it allows you to have your “final word” on the issue or topic. It may also help to remember that your conclusion is typically the last thing your teacher reads before grading. How can you effectively wrap up your ideas in a fresh way that doesn’t sound repetitive or too simplistic? Here are some useful tips to consider when crafting your conclusion:

- “So What?” – Your conclusion should be able to answer the question, “so what?” Although your paper has elaborated on the thesis statement, main points, supporting details, etc., the conclusion can be a place where the thesis is reiterated and its significance is explained. Play the “so what?” game with yourself by asking that question in relation to the paper. If you’re stuck coming up with answers, try free-writing your conclusion in the form of a letter to a friend telling him or her about what you learned from writing that paper or how the paper matters in everyday life.
- A Challenge – A conclusion can also serve as a challenge for readers, inviting them to take the next step or take action regarding the topic of the paper. By issuing a challenge, the conclusion can help readers redirect the information in the paper in a way that’s meaningful for them.
- Looking Ahead – Providing some information about the possible repercussions or consequences of your topic in the foreseeable future could be another way to conclude your paper.



Asking your readers to consider some possibilities regarding your topic can help them see it on a more global scale.

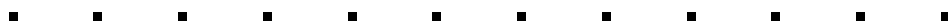
- Return to the Introduction – The conclusion is a useful way to bring the paper full circle to take advantage of the inviting introduction. If you’ve begun with a scenario, for instance, you can conclude with the same scenario to demonstrate the paper’s usefulness in constructing a new understanding of the issue.

Although there are some very effective ways to end a paper, some conclusions almost undermine the other successes in the paper.

Here are some **ineffective** ways to conclude a paper:

- The Summary Conclusion: Remember that your conclusion is called a “conclusion,” not a “summary.” Your readers have read your paper; they don’t necessarily need a recap. However, you can show your readers how your ideas fit together instead of listing all the ideas the paper has already presented.
- The “That’s my story, and I’m sticking to it” Conclusion: These conclusions typically just restate the thesis statement and are glaringly short. Usually, they’re written when writers can’t think of anything else

See **THOUGHTS** page 2





Top Ten Excuses for Late Papers

1. "I had to go on an emergency vacation."
2. "It was in my car and my car was stolen."
3. "My three-year old thinks every piece of paper in the house is hers here's my homework with her drawing on it."
4. "I was unable to get to class because my child threw my car keys down the toilet."
5. "I stayed up until 4 a.m. completing your assignment, but fell asleep and slept through my alarm."
6. "There was a sudden gravity inversion in the area of my house last night, and all my papers flew into outer space and I will have to rewrite the whole thing from scratch!" (This one is usually only used by science (physics) or applied math students.)
7. "My engine fell out of my carno, really, it did!"
8. "It was my birthday."
9. "I was in Tent City."
10. "The D'backs were playing!"

THOUGHTS from page 1

to say. Typically, these conclusions begin with cliché phrases like "in conclusion." If you find this kind of conclusion in your paper, brainstorm ways to explain the significance of your paper and find a better transition to your concluding ideas.

- The "Sherlock Holmes" Conclusion: Some writers keep the thesis statements or controlling ideas a mystery for readers by keeping it hidden in the conclusion. Argumentative or research based papers are not the place for a mystery; typically, readers expect the main point or thesis statement early in the paper. If you find that a complete discussion of the thesis statement doesn't appear until the conclusion, then the paper needs to be revised.
- The "America the Beautiful," / "I Am Woman," / "We Shall Overcome" Conclusion: Emotion is the key appeal in this kind of conclusion. If you think you can hear one of the above songs in the background as you read your conclusion, consider that your readers may find the

conclusion overly gushing and inappropriate. Even if your emotion is sincere, a better way to provide appropriate sentiment is to consider the importance of your topic to your readers' lives.

- The Grab Bag Conclusion: This conclusion includes all the leftover ideas that couldn't find a place elsewhere in the paper. Although those extra bits of interesting information and trivia can be illuminating, consider that they weren't in the body of the paper for a reason—they didn't fit in a coherent way—so, they probably don't belong in the conclusion either.

Remember that the conclusion is your place to express your final thoughts to your readers; take responsibility for your ideas and draw a conclusion for your readers. Ideally, the conclusion should make your readers glad they took the time to read your paper.

Compiled from "Conclusions" (available at www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts_pdf/Conclusions.pdf.) and "Strategies for Writing a Conclusion" (available at [/leo.stcloud-state.edu/acadwrite/conclude.html](http://leo.stcloud-state.edu/acadwrite/conclude.html)).

Stump the Grammar Goddess

Dear Grammar Goddess ~

I cannot, for the life of me, remember when I'm supposed to use "that" versus "which." Can you, once and for all, explain the difference?

-- Frustrated in Florence

Dear Frustrated:

But it's so simple! The word *which* can be used to introduce both restrictive AND restrictive clauses, although many writers use it exclusively to introduce nonrestrictive clauses, but they're just snobs who don't have anyone to eat their lunch with anyway. Conversely, the word *that* is used exclusively to introduce restrictive clauses. Okay then! Get it? Got it? Good!

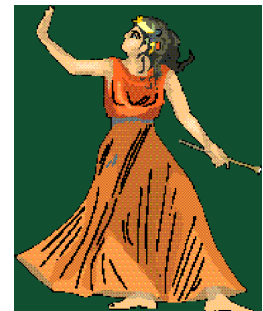
Well, just in case you're a little rusty with your restrictive vs. nonrestrictive clauses (and who isn't these days?), let's look at an example.

Example A: "The garage that my uncle built is falling down."

Example B: "The garage, which my uncle built, is falling down."

The choice of *which* versus *that* has to do with how essential the information is that you are adding. In Example A, you can say that sentence anywhere and your listener knows exactly what garage you're talking about – the one your uncle built. In Example B, you would have to be within viewing distance of the garage, because the *which* is adding nonessential, "added" information (thus the use of commas to set off the non-essential information).

(Her Highness collaborated with the good folks at Capital Community College for this answer at <http://ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/faq.htm>)



Ambiguous Newspaper Headlines

These real newspaper headlines – gathered from local, national, and international newspapers across the globe – are **ambiguous**; you can see what the journalist meant to say, but in each case there is a more amusing interpretation of the headline.

EYE DROPS OFF SHELF
PROSTITUTES APPEAL TO POPE
KIDS MAKE NUTRITIOUS SNACKS
STOLEN PAINTING FOUND BY TREE
LUNG CANCER IN WOMEN MUSHROOMS
QUEEN MARY HAVING BOTTOM SCRAPED
DEALERS WILL HEAR CAR TALK AT NOON
MINERS REFUSE TO WORK AFTER DEATH
MILK DRINKERS ARE TURNING TO POWDER
DRUNK GETS NINE MONTHS IN VIOLIN CASE
JUVENILE COURT TO TRY SHOOTING DEFENDANT
COMPLAINTS ABOUT NBA REFEREES GROWING UGLY
PANDA MATING FAILS; VETERINARIAN TAKES OVER
POLICE BEGIN CAMPAIGN TO RUN DOWN JAYWALKERS
12 ON THEIR WAY TO CRUISE AMONG DEAD IN PLANE CRASH
KILLER SENTENCED TO DIE FOR SECOND TIME IN 10 YEARS

SAFETY EXPERTS SAY SCHOOL BUS PASSENGERS SHOULD BE BELTED
2 SISTERS REUNITED AFTER 18 YEARS AT CHECKOUT COUNTER
MAN EATING PIRANHA MISTAKENLY SOLD AS PET FISH
ASTRONAUT TAKES BLAME FOR GAS IN SPACECRAFT
QUARTER OF A MILLION CHINESE LIVE ON WATER
INCLUDE YOUR CHILDREN WHEN BAKING COOKIES
OLD SCHOOL PILLARS ARE REPLACED BY ALUMNI
GRANDMOTHER OF EIGHT MAKES HOLE IN ONE
HOSPITALS ARE SUED BY 7 FOOT DOCTORS
LAWMEN FROM MEXICO BARBECUE GUESTS
TWO SOVIET SHIPS COLLIDE, ONE DIES
ENRAGED COW INJURES FARMER WITH AX
LACK OF BRAINS HINDERS RESEARCH
RED TAPE HOLDS UP NEW BRIDGE
SQUAD HELPS DOG BITE VICTIM
IRAQI HEAD SEEKS ARMS
HERSHEY BARS PROTEST

From www.Fun-with-Words.com

Inspiration is wonderful when it happens, but the writer must develop an approach for the rest of the time... The wait is simply too long.

Leonard Bernstein (1918 - 1990)

Top Ten Tips for Handling Finals

1. Don't leave things to the last minute.
Murphy's Law: If a problem will occur, it will occur in the 11th hour.
2. Keep calm. Pressure, tension and stress are normal for the end of the semester. You are not the only student (or instructor, for that matter!) feeling them. Keep calm. Pace yourself. You may need to reduce social activity in final weeks to complete take home exams, papers or projects to the best of your ability ... you've come this far, so don't give in to distractions now!
3. Plan something fun to do right after finals, something to look forward to, and then just accept that in the meantime, you have to work, work, work.
4. Chocolate!
5. Don't procrastinate - study in short yet multiple bursts of time.
6. Get some sleep! Missing just 2 hours of sleep 2 nights in a row can cause sleep deprivation, leading to that foggy, spaced-out feeling.
7. Eat well. Make sure you eat regular meals. Also, avoid alcohol and limit caffeine intake.
8. To help prepare for that big test, try to have an attitude of confidence as you go into the test. Try to leave all anger and worry at home and focus on the test. Visualization is a good strategy before the testing date. Imagining doing well on the test is a very effective way to boost self-esteem and confidence before the test.
9. When beginning the test, be sure to look over the entire test and answer the easier questions first. Also weigh the questions. Do the ones that are worth more points first to help boost your grade. If you're writing an essay, try to make an outline.
10. Set up a study schedule before the finals week so that you do not have to cram everything into the last minutes.

Faculty “tell all” at March workshop!

If you missed the Writing Center’s “Anatomy of an A” panel presentation on March 24, 2004, you missed a lot! Six presenters – Diane Clark (English), Sharon Fagan (Education), Mike Will (English), Heather Horn (English), D.J. Christian (Business) and Ralph Sandoval (Reading) – shared their criteria for assigning top grades to student papers. Students who attended learned that considering how their writing affects their audience is not “just an English thing.”

Among the topics discussed:

- Do faculty take into consideration a student’s effort when assigning a grade?
- Why students should never feel they are “bothering” their instructor.
- What good writing and good bridges have in common.

Our April workshop, “Unlocking the Secrets of Citing Research,” was our final workshop for 2003-4.

HOWEVER, we have a new series planned for the 2004-5 academic year, so be sure to visit the Writing Center for more information!



Mike Will, Sharon Fagan, Diane Clark and D.J. Christian present *Anatomy of an “A” Paper* Workshop in March.

GOOD NEWS!

The Writing Center will be OPEN for business this summer, Monday-Thursday, 9am to 2pm! We have 13 computer stations, a full reference library, dozens of helpful handouts on every aspect of the writing process, and friendly tutors who can help with any writing assignment in your CGCC classes. See you soon!

32% more students served!

The Writing Center has been very active this semester serving students with their writing assignments. Thirteen weeks into the semester, we’ve served 2,587 students. This figure is up 32% from Spring 2003 and up 4% from Fall 2003.

Read over your compositions, and wherever you meet with a passage which you think is particularly fine, strike it out.

Samuel Johnson (1709 - 1784), from Boswell's *Life of Johnson*

Did You Know?



Judge Jacon the Terrible taking lawyers to task for writing errors

Think grammar doesn’t matter in the “real world”? Neither did Brian Puricelli, a Philadelphia lawyer representing a plaintiff in a case against the city before Magistrate Judge Jacob P. Hart.

Puricelli found out the hard way that grammar counts for a lot... a lot of cold, hard cash, that is! Judge Hart ruled in favor of Puricelli’s client, but reduced the attorney’s fees by half on account of written work that was “careless to the point of disrespectful.”

Among Puricelli’s many errors was misspelling the judge’s name as Jacon, not Jacob, Hart and referring to the court as being in the Easter, not eastern, district of Pennsylvania.

In a March 4, 2004 interview with National Public Radio host Melissa Block, Judge Hart said that ninety percent of a lawyer’s work is outside the courtroom. “So no matter how good you are in front of the jury, most of your reputation’s going to be built on what you write.”

Ultimately, says Hart, writing errors distract judges from the lawyer’s arguments and are a disservice to the lawyer’s client.

So make proofreading a habit, now and throughout your career. Your reputation – perhaps even your livelihood – depends on it!

From www.Fun-with-Words.com