Conclusion

The conclusion is often the most difficult part of an essay to write.

A conclusion should:
* Reinforce the thesis
* Tie together the main points of the essay
* Leave a lasting impression with the reader

Think of the conclusion as an upside down funnel. Just as the introduction went from general to specific, the conclusion should swell from specific to general. Tell the reader why the paper is significant and applicable to the real world.

An effective conclusion may include one or more of the following:
* a brief synthesis (not summary) of the paper’s main points
* a challenge or warning to the reader
* a reference to the future
* a vivid image (such as the one in the example below
* a reflective quotation
* a thought-provoking question
* a parallel to a related global implication

Example

Introduction:
I gripped the steering wheel tightly as I pulled into the parking lot of my first job. Butterflies swirled in my stomach. Nervous thoughts danced uncontrollably in my mind. Would my coworkers like me? What would my first mistake be? Maybe I would make no mistakes at all and they would christen me Employee of the Month after my very first month! Or what if I messed up royally and I got fired after only my first day? Taking a deep breath, I turned off the engine, got out of the car. The pace of my steps matched the beating of my heart.

Conclusion:
Before turning off the lights, I picked up a few loose streamers and cake crumbs on the floor. Where had the last 10 years gone? The countless late nights and early mornings had all been worth it this night. Saying goodbye to coworkers who had become friends, and trusted administrators who had become my mentors, was as difficult as anything I’d ever encountered. Moving to another company was a huge step, but a necessary one to advance up the corporate ladder. I had to remind myself of this as I closed the door which locked behind me, and walked outside. Once inside my car, I gripped the steering wheel tightly, and drove out of the parking lot. Nervous thoughts danced uncontrollably in my mind and butterflies swirled in my stomach.

*Key point: Never write, “In conclusion . . .”. Just write it! We would never begin a paper, “In introduction . . .”.*