Tips for Writing Conclusions
(For the thesis-driven paper)

Aim to write a conclusion that . . .

- *Quickly summarizes your thesis and proof.*
  All you need to do is to remind your reader of the high points of your paper briefly before explaining the implications of your argument, which is the real purpose of a strong conclusion.

- *Explains the aim of your paper.*
  Tell the reader why they should even care what you argued. (And no, "Because that was the assignment" is *not* an appropriate reason to cite!)

- *Makes a bigger point.*
  Explain the larger implications of your argument regarding how the reader should now interpret the text, the research, the society, the theory, or whatever.

Try to avoid writing a conclusion that . . .

- *Is nothing more than a five-sentence summary of your paper.*
  The reader has already read your paper, so give him or her some credit! Spend your time instead explaining the relevance of your argument to the bigger picture.

- *Springs a surprise point that is not closely related to the paper or that needs excessive explanation.*
  A conclusion should flow naturally out of the previous argument, not suddenly upend or subvert it.

- *Ends with a quote.*
  The argument is *your* argument, and it is appropriate for you to end it with *your* insight and direction. Don't sabotage your credibility by letting someone else's words be the last thing your reader remembers.

- *Indulges in tangents, irrelevant information, and generalizations.*
  You have a limited amount of space in which to leave your reader with the implications and importance of your argument, so don't weaken your paper by wandering at the end.

An example of one format for a tightly constructed, interesting conclusion is . . .

- *1 or 2 sentences that sum up the thesis and main points.*
  Give your reader the quick highlights of your paper… but not a play-by-play reiteration! You simply need to remind your reader of the force of your argument before diving into its implications.

- *1 or 2 sentences that explain the larger implications of the argument.*
  Why did it matter that you made the argument at all? This is the place to explain what your argument implies about the bigger picture, such as how your reader should view the text or the research or whatever. Convince your reader of the relevance of your thesis, or else your paper was a waste of time to read, fascinating though it may have been.

- *1 sentence that wraps up the conclusion in a thought-provoking way.*
  This final sentence should be pithy, memorable, and generally thought-provoking for your reader. Keep it short and sweet, and don't try to encompass the entire world in your last sentence. Use it to leave the reader thinking about your paper!