

The Conclusion

Your conclusion will often be the only part of your presentation that the audience remembers, therefore, it must be well planned out. A conclusion serves three purposes:

- To give the audience one last opportunity to understand the material.
- To provide the audience with a course of action (for persuasive speeches only).
- To let the audience know that the speech ends soon.

Ask yourself this question: What do you want the audience to walk out of the room remembering? That should help determine your concluding remarks.

Understanding the material:

- This is best accomplished through a summary statement. Restating the main points synthesizes the information (as well as your arguments) for your audience.
- Example: "As we've seen during our examination of animal cruelty laws, there are many reasons an animal might be harmed, the majority of which are avoidable. These reasons include the maturity of pet owners, cultural ideas about pets, and other circumstances, like the owner's death."

Course of action (if it's a persuasive speech):

- Here is your chance to take your speech to the next level and really make it count. Tell your audience what they can do with their new-found knowledge.
- Example: "Things don't have to stay this way. If what I have said about animal cruelty has moved you, donate your time or money to the local no-kill animal shelter, and help make things a little better."
- Example: "Now that you know a little bit about the macrobiotic life forms in our pond, why not go to gogreen.com to learn ways to take advantages of their fertilization properties."

Ending the speech:

- By this point in your speech, you have said what you need to say and you just need to make a clean exit. Saying something simple, such as "In conclusion," "In closing," or "Let me end by saying" gives you a graceful and clear way to end your speech. Remember, linking back to your introduction is an easy way to make your speech seem more polished and well-planned.
- Example: "In conclusion, Abraham Lincoln's quote concerning a house divided is especially important today. We can no longer expect to run a country effectively when we fight over trivial and meaningless issues. Until politicians realize this, we will never be able to make needed changes in the world."