

graph and, when dissatisfied, the second one. You know intuitively that the theme sentences of most paragraphs occupy one of those positions. When they do, the paragraph is committed to a **direct pattern**, whereby the later sentences will support and perhaps also place limitations on an early sentence that states the theme. Even if the theme sentence comes third, the paragraph can still show the characteristic features of the direct pattern.

**theme sentence first** Most well-organized paragraphs begin with a theme sentence:

There is a paradox about the South Seas that every visitor immediately discovers. Tropical shores symbolize man's harmony with a kind and bountiful nature. Natives escape the common vexations of modern life by simply relaxing. They reach into palms for coconuts, into the sea for fish, and into calabashes for poi. But when the tranquilized tourist reaches Hawaii, the paradise of the Pacific, he finds the most expensive resort in the world and a tourist industry that will relieve him of his traveler's checks with a speed and ease that would bring a smile to the lips of King Kamehameha.<sup>1</sup>

Here the theme sentence announces a *paradox*—that is, a seeming contradiction—and the rest of the paragraph consists of supporting or explanatory sentences that develop the two halves of that paradox, harmonious nature and commercial exploitation. The result is extreme clarity: the structure of the paragraph fulfills the promise given in the theme sentence, and the reader feels guided by that structure at each moment.

**theme sentence delayed** When a theme sentence within the direct pattern does not come first, it usually comes second, after an introductory sentence that prepares for a shift of emphasis:

introductory sentence	{	The statistics, then, paint a depressing picture. Yet if we set aside the government reports and take the trouble to interview farm workers one by one, we find an astounding degree of confidence in the future. The workers are already thinking a generation ahead. Even if they have little expectation of improving their own lives, most of them are convinced that their children will begin to participate meaningfully in the American dream.
theme sentence		
supporting sentences	{	

And sometimes, still within the direct pattern, you will find a theme sentence coming third, after *two* sentences that prepare for a new idea. The following student paragraph is representative:

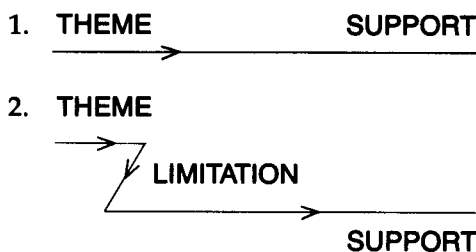
introductory sentences	{	Such a calamity should be avoided at all cost. But what if the very act of predicting an earthquake caused more chaos than the earthquake itself?
theme sentence		The existing evidence suggests that immediate earthquake predictions, when released to the public, would have tremendous social consequences. People fleeing the cities would create traffic jams of monumental proportions. The work hours lost would be considerable. Looting of abandoned homes and businesses would surely ensue. And suppose the prediction turned out to be false? Who, then, would be held accountable for the loss of business income, the loss of looted property, and the shaking of people's confidence in the future of the area? All these consequences should be weighed against the merits of alerting people to the likelihood that an earthquake may be on the way.
supporting sentences		

If a paragraph is sufficiently long, then, it can show a direct pattern of development even when the theme sentence comes neither first nor second. The essential feature of the direct pattern is that the theme sentence comes *relatively* early, so that we have the main point in mind when limiting or supporting considerations are introduced.

Note that a direct paragraph, just like an essay whose thesis is stated near the outset, can comfortably include **limiting** considerations—those that “go against” the theme. In the following student paragraph, for example, the writer can afford to offer a “con” remark, which is placed strategically between the theme sentence and two final sentences of support for that statement:

theme sentence	{	The “greenhouse effect,” whereby the temperature of the atmosphere rises with the increased burning of hydrocarbons, may have devastating consequences for our planet within a generation or two. Similar scares, it is true, have come and gone without leaving any lasting mark. Yet there is an important difference this time. We know a good deal more about the greenhouse effect and its likely results than we knew, say, about invasions from outer space or mutations from atomic bomb tests. The greenhouse effect is already under way, and there are very slender grounds for thinking it will be reversed or even slowed without a more sudden cataclysm such as all-out nuclear war.
limiting sentence		
supporting sentences		

Direct paragraphs, then, can follow two models, one including and one omitting limiting sentences:

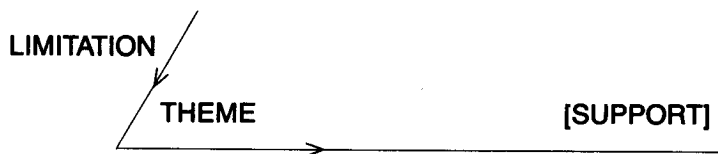


These models bypass some variants (pp. 154–155), but they show the heart of the matter, which is that direct paragraphs *eventually* supply supporting points to make the theme believable.

### The Pivoting Pattern

Many effective paragraphs not only delay the theme sentence, but begin by “going against it” with one or more limiting sentences. Such paragraphs work by pivoting decisively from the limiting considerations to the theme, which then dominates any remaining sentences.

Thus a scheme of the **pivoting** paragraph would look like this:



The brackets around “Support” indicate that a pivoting paragraph *can* end with its theme sentence. More commonly, though, the theme sentence is supported by one or more following sentences.

Why should you bother to master the pivoting pattern? There are several reasons. In the first place, that pattern is suited to showing your reader that you have considered objections to your theme; by placing the objections first, you give them a fair hearing. Then, too, a successfully executed pivot requires, and therefore exhibits, a relatively high degree of control; your reader sees that you were secure enough about your theme to delay revealing it. Thus an occasional pivoting paragraph identifies you not only as a writer who is capable of various “moves,” but also as someone who has passed beyond the first-draft stage of grasping at ideas and clinging to them for dear life. Indeed, the best time to think about devising some pivoting paragraphs may be after you have finished a draft, when you actually possess the degree of control that this pattern demands.

Since the pivoting paragraph operates by taking a sharp turn, it customarily announces that turn with a signal word, alerting the reader to the paragraph’s new and conclusive direction. Notice how the following student paragraph, taken from an essay quoted earlier (p. 131), pivots neatly on the word *But* in sentence 2:

- |                                |   |  |
|--------------------------------|---|--|
| limiting<br>sentence           | { | 1. When we think of Gandhi fasting, plastering mud poultices on his belly, and testing his vow of continence by sharing a bed with his grand-niece, we can easily regard him as an eccentric who happened to |
| pivot to the<br>theme sentence | { | be politically lucky. 2. <b>BUT</b> the links between his private fads and his political methods turn out to be quite logical. 3. Gandhi’s pursuit of  |

supporting  
sentences

personal rigors helped him to achieve a rare degree of discipline, and that discipline allowed him to approach political crises with extraordinary courage. 4. The example of his self-control, furthermore, was contagious; it is doubtful that a more worldly man could have led millions of his countrymen to adopt the tactic of nonviolent resistance.

Similarly, the classic pivoting signal *however* shows us that the third sentence of the following paragraph is making a reversal of emphasis:

Health experts always seem to be telling Americans what *not* to eat. Cholesterol, salt and sugar are but a few of the dietary no-no's that threaten to make dinnertime about as pleasurable as an hour of push-ups. In a report last week on the role of nutrition in cancer, HOWEVER, a blue-ribbon committee of the National Academy of Sciences offered a carrot—as well as oranges, tomatoes and cantaloupes—along with the usual admonitory stick. While some foods appear to promote cancer and should be avoided, said the panel, other comestibles may actually help ward off the disease.<sup>2</sup>

A pivoting paragraph can get along without a “turn signal” word if other language makes the turn sufficiently clear—for example, *That is no longer the case* or *Such is the theory, at any rate*. In general, though, the farther you venture from a straightforward theme-first pattern, the more important it is to guide your reader with directional markers.

The pivoting pattern is especially common in paragraphs of comparison and contrast (pp. 52–53). As we have observed, the first part of such a paragraph usually dwells on resemblances, and then a somewhat more emphatic part dwells on differences. The following student paragraph is typical:

resemblances

the sentence

differences

1. Tillie Olsen's short stories, “Hey Sailor, What Ship?” and “O Yes,” both chronicle the disintegration of a close relationship. 2. In both stories, a friendship falls apart when one or both parties find it more trying to sustain the friendship than to let it go. 3. The underlying causes of strain, however, are quite different in the two cases. 4. In “Hey Sailor . . .” a change in Whitey's character leads to his falling out with his family, but in “O Yes” external forces—social pressures—tear Carol and Parry apart.

Note once again how a key signal word, *however*, alerts us to the pivoting movement.

## The Suspended Pattern

We have seen that a *direct* paragraph offers an early theme sentence, so that a reader knows what idea will be supported (and perhaps limited) as the paragraph proceeds. A *pivoting* paragraph, in contrast, delays the theme sentence until at least one limiting consideration has been addressed. In both models the paragraph's theme exercises a powerful organizing control. The longer a theme sentence is delayed, however, the more opportunity a writer has to do something other than support or limit the theme. And this is sometimes an advantage, for paragraphs have more uses than mere position taking.

Look, for instance, at this distinctly uncombative narrative paragraph:

Shortly after dawn, at the Saint-Antoine produce market in the ancient French city of Lyons, a white pickup truck screeches around a corner, double-parks impatiently and disgorges a rugged man wearing a rumpled windbreaker. As if by prearranged signal, prize raspberries, dewy spinach and pristine baby carrots suddenly emerge from hiding places below the trestle tables where they've been saved for inspection by this very special customer. "*Viens ici, Paul,*" shouts a fruit vendor. "I've got some melons you won't believe." Slicing a sample in half, the man in the windbreaker rejects the melons and some string beans as well ("too fat"). But thirty-five minutes later, he has sniffed, nibbled, pinched, prodded, and fondled his way through the choicest fruits and vegetables, loaded fifteen crates of produce into his van and hummed off toward his next quarry: plump chickens from Bresse, Charolais beef and fresh red mullet. Paul Bocuse, the most visible, the most influential—and possibly the best—chef in the world, has begun another working day.<sup>3</sup>

Here the theme sentence comes last, as it also might in certain pivoting paragraphs. But in this case there is no pivot to be found—no reversal of poles between initial limiting sentences and the theme. Indeed, strictly speaking, the paragraph contains neither limiting nor supporting sentences. Rather, it proceeds through narrative development—one event succeeds another—to a climactic theme sentence in which Paul Bocuse's identity is revealed. This is a **suspended paragraph**, one that builds to a climax or conclusion by some means other than a sharp reversal of direction.

Sometimes, as in the "jogging" paragraph on page 57 or in the following student paragraph, the theme sentence at the end follows logically from all the sentences ahead of it:

In the early fourteenth century, Northern Europe was subjected to a terrible famine. Meanwhile, economic instability caused whole kingdoms

theme sentence

to go bankrupt. Then in 1348-50 the worst plague in history ravaged the Continent, killing perhaps half the population. It is little wonder, therefore, that this was a period of profound social and political unrest; the supposedly stable order of feudalism had proved helpless to cope with various forms of disaster.

But even when a suspended paragraph turns out to have been constructed as evidence —————> conclusion, it does not "read" that way. How are we to know that the early sentences are evidence for a point that has not yet been made? As you can see from the "Bocuse" example (p. 158), the suspended paragraph moves from *discussion* to theme, maintaining the reader's sentence-by-sentence interest while leading to a statement that brings things together at last:

DISCUSSION

THEME

If you wondered whether you should trouble yourself to master the pivoting paragraph, you probably regard suspended paragraphs as an arty luxury. As it happens, however, the suspended pattern has a workaday usefulness: it is ideal for both *introductory* and *concluding* paragraphs (pp. 125-128, 130-132). An introductory paragraph that ends with its theme sentence—a sentence revealing either the topic or the thesis of the paper—can gradually entice a reader into becoming interested in that topic or thesis. At a moment of maximum reluctance on the reader's part to become involved, you can put suspense to work for you. And a suspended concluding paragraph allows you to end your paper with a "punch line"—an excellent tactic if you have saved one strong point for your last paragraph. In addition, suspended paragraphs in any part of an essay redouble that sense of pleasurable drama, risk taking, and control that we found in deftly handled pivoting paragraphs.

Note, finally, that the crucial trait of a suspended paragraph is not that the theme sentence comes exactly last, but that the reader gets caught up in a discussion whose point is being deliberately held back. In the following suspended paragraph, for example, the theme sentence comes second to last:

discussion

Linus Pauling has one of those faces that photographers love because it does their work for them. In moments of repose, it has that dreamy quality that Einstein's had—hair rising in eccentric silver wisps, periwinkle eyes that often glance inward during the conversation at some abstract law of motion or of matter. It would be tempting to see it as the Face of Science, except that Pauling is also a man of action. At 77, he

	{	has a schedule that would exhaust a man half his age. Last month major trips to Scotland and Cuba were sandwiched into a calendar of speaking engagements and scientific conferences booked as far in advance as
<i>theme sentence</i>	{	a star rock group's. Wherever he goes, and whatever else he does, however, he is an ambassador of vitamin C. It is a subject never far from his
<i>final remark</i>	{	mind. <sup>4</sup>

Perhaps it has occurred to you that the three patterns of paragraph development correspond to three patterns of essay structure. The direct paragraph resembles an essay that quickly reveals its thesis and then defends it, sometimes with a treatment of opposing considerations as well. The pivoting paragraph is like an essay that starts out with opposing considerations but then turns to its thesis. And the suspended paragraph corresponds to the essay, rarely seen, that saves its thesis for the end, where it turns out to be the upshot of all that has been said. Each pattern, when skillfully executed, delivers a form of satisfaction that the others lack.

## BEGINNING THE ESSAY

Narration. The narrative introduction begins with a brief story that dramatizes the subject. Your dramatization may be fictional or true.

### 1. Begin with a fictional anecdote:

In the old realm of Egelloc, there was a custom that upon reaching the brink of the river Ytirutam each citizen could choose one of two boats to carry him across the water to the beautiful, mysterious hall of Efil. One boat had a glass bottom through which passengers could observe the strange and teeming life under the waters surface. But because such a view was sometimes confusing or frightening, the ferry people also provided a boat in which the glass bottom had been replaced with a mirror. In this boat, the passengers had only to stare at their own reflections for the duration of the long journey. This made many of the people in the mirror-bottomed boat extremely pleased with themselves. "After all," they confided to themselves, "after the long journey, won't we know ourselves more than those who wished to look out at some strange and irrelevant forms of life?"

(student essay)

### 2. Begin with a true anecdote:

At my church where I teach Sunday school to third graders, I often choose lessons from an easy-to-read Bible story book, which has many colorful pictures. Last Sunday, the class was scheduled to do lesson three, so I gathered my students in a circle. Looking around the ring of eager faces, I asked, "Now, who would like to read the first paragraph?" Suddenly, my normally noisy, chattering group fell completely silent. The faces tint were smiling only a few minutes ago were lowered and pensive. "Doesn't anyone want to read?" I asked again. My question was answered by ten little heads shaking emphatically from left to right. "Come on, Arthur," I urged. "I know you'll read for us."

I don't want to," was the immediate reply. "I hate to read."

(Student essay)

Exposition. The expository paragraph explains or clarifies the subject or idea.

### 1. Begin by explaining vague or unfamiliar words:

The Cravenfield Police Department has long been guilty of Comstockery, the suppression of controversial literature. . . .

To George Bernard Shaw, Joan of Arc was a genius—"A person who, seeing farther and probing deeper than other people, has a different set of ethical valuations from theirs, and has energy enough to give effect to this extra vision and its valuation."



2. Begin by restating your idea in more specific terms:

I am and, for as long as I can remember, I have always been a poor visualizer. Words, even the pregnant words of poets, do not evoke pictures in my mind. No hypnagogic visions greet me on the verge of sleep. When I recall something, the memory does not present itself to me as a vividly seen event or object. By an effort of the will, I can evoke a not very vivid image of what happened yesterday afternoon, of how the Lungarno used to look before the bridges were destroyed, of the Bayswater Road when the only buses were green and tiny and drawn by aged horses at three and a half miles an hour. But such images have little substance and absolutely no autonomous life of their own. They stand to real, perceived objects in the same relation as Homer's ghosts stood to the men of flesh and blood, who came to visit them in the shades. Only when I have a high temperature do my mental images come to independent life. To those in whom the faculty of visualization is strong, my inner world must seem curiously drab, limited and uninteresting. This was the world--a poor thing but my own--which I expected to see transformed into something completely unlike itself.

(Aldous Huxley, *The Doors of Perception*)

The trouble is everything is too big. There are too many people, for example, in the city I live in. In walking along the street, one passes scores of other people every minute; any response to them as human beings is impossible; they must be passed by as indifferently as ants pass each other in the corridors of the anthill. . . .

(Dwight MacDonald, "Too Big.")

3. Begin by rejecting wrong meanings, by ruling out wrong interpretations:

Our cereals are poisoning us. Now, I'm not referring to the ripe fields of corn--what you call "maize"--unfolding throughout the central valley; nor am I referring to "cereal," that is, wheat, rye, barley, oats, millet, or rice. I'm not, in fact, referring to any grain in its natural state. My concern is with the color-treated, candy-coated, dye-injected remnants of grains a Captain Crunch, Cocoa Puffs, Rice Krispies, and Boo Boo Treats for Scary Eats.

(Amanda Rekonwith, *Cereal*, Vol. III)

4. Begin by presenting facts and figures of a rather startling nature:

Over one million Americans have already been slaughtered in highway accidents. A million more will be killed over the next 15 years. Irrate safety experts say that fully two-thirds of all traffic victims could be spared their lives if auto manufacturers could place less emphasis on "styling" and more on "crash-worthiness."

(Ralph Ginsburg, *S. O. B. Detroit*)

(The introduction, you've probably noticed, must present the essay-idea and must make sure that the idea is sufficiently clear. Its third task is to provide an "attention-getter." Here are a few techniques.)

1. Provocative essay idea.

It would be difficult to find a more shattering refutation of the lessons of cheap morality than the life of James Boswell. One of the most extraordinary successes in the history of civilization was achieved by an idler, a lecher, a drunkard, and a snob.

(Lytton Strachy, "James Boswell")

2. Rejection of widely accepted opinions.

Most American parents want to send their children to college. And their children, for the most part, are anxious to go. It is an American tradition that there is something about a college that transforms an ordinary infant into a superior adult. Men and women who have been to college sometimes suspect that this is not the case, but they seldom say so. They are alumni, and, as such, it is their life work to maintain the tradition that college--their college anyway--is the greatest place in the world.

College is the greatest place in the world for those who ought to go to college and who go for the right reasons. For those who ought not to go to college or who go for the wrong reasons, college is a waste of time and money.

3. Posing a problem or Question.

Suppose there were no critics to tell us how to react to a picture, a play, or a new composition of music. Suppose we wandered innocent as the dawn into an art exhibit of unsigned paintings. By what standards, by what values would we decide whether they were good or bad, talented or untalented, successes or failures? How can we ever know that what we think is right?

(Marya Mannes, "How Do You Know It's Good")

4. The occasion for writing.

(Almost any kind of event can be the occasion for writing: a Congressional vote on a controversial bill, the writer's encounter with a zany character, the appearance of a new motion picture or book, and so on. The occasion mentioned in this next introduction is the popularity of a mediocre novel.)

The most alarming literary news in years is the enormous success of James Gould Cozzens's *By Love Possessed*. It sold 170,000 copies in the first six weeks of publication--more than all eleven of the author's previous novels put together. [The novel has remained] at the top of the bestseller list for two months. Hollywood and the *Reader's Digest* have paid \$100,000

apiece for privilege of wreaking their wills upon it.

(Dwight MacDonald, "By Cozzens Possessed")

## 5. Quotation.

"The class was keen and intelligent," said the visiting professor from England. They were excited by the poems we read, and they had insight. They talked more readily than classes do at home. It was a delightful teaching experience. But when I asked them to write on those same poems they were lost. Their papers were appalling. They couldn't plan, construct, find words for their meaning, or even punctuate and spell. It was a shattering anticlimax."

("British and American Schools," *Harpers*)

A final method of organizing your introduction is often found in scientific and philosophic writings. Although it may be the technique you're most accustomed to, try to reserve it primarily for those essays of sufficient length and complexity to warrant a brief outline in advance of the argument.

In the pages that follow I shall bring forward proof that there is a psychological technique which makes it possible to interpret dreams, and that, if that procedure is employed, every dream reveals itself as a psychical structure which has a meaning and which can be inserted at an assignable point in the mental activities of waking life. I shall further endeavour to elucidate the processes to which the strangeness and obscurity of dreams are due and to deduce from those processes and nature of the psychical forces by whose concurrent or mutually opposing action dreams are generated. Having gone thus far, my description will break off, for it will have reached a point at which the problem of dreams merges into more comprehensive problems, the solution of which must be approached upon the basis of material of another kind.

(Sigmund Freud, *Interpretation of Dreams*)

Looking back now, I can see the advantages of growing up in a small town, first, you get to know the people--know them very well: secondly, you have a great deal of freedom; and thirdly--odd as it may seem--you are never bored, simply because there is so much to do.

Jazz musician Charlie "Yardbird" Parker's life can be summed up by its three main crucial periods, his childhood in Kansas City; his successful years as a recording artist; and the years of his decline.

clusions only after carefully considering the demands of the essay you are writing.

## Some Examples

Six commonly used concluding strategies are:

1. Restatement
2. Chronological wind-up
3. Illustration
4. Prediction
5. Recommendation of a course of action
6. Quotation or dialogue

1. **Restatement** This is the most familiar type of conclusion. The controlling idea is repeated in different words, and the main points of the essay's argument are reviewed or restated. A straightforward essay, whose introductory paragraph is a direct announcement, will end this way. Restatement has the advantage of reinforcing one last time all your major points. For this reason, it is an excellent concluding strategy for an essay which seeks to prove a point.

The following example, the conclusion of a student essay on living conditions in Appalachia, uses the technique of restatement.

It is clear from even a casual trip through much of Appalachia that this region presents a challenge to a social planner. But before any utopian schemes can be considered, basic needs must be met. The region's main problems remain very basic ones: inadequate housing, poor nutrition, and a lack of educational facilities.

This paragraph restates all the main points of the essay in the order in which they appeared: poor housing, poor diet, and poor schools. While this listing adds to the essay's directness, a similar effect could be achieved through a summarizing phrase like "social and eco-

nomic deprivation" instead of the three specific points.

An answer to a question on an early childhood development midterm ends with a restatement of the student's major points.

If a day-care center offers trained personnel, a spacious and safe environment, and creatively designed equipment, it can be a positive influence on a child. As recent studies have shown, there is no reason why a well-run day-care facility cannot be as warm and as stimulating as the child's home. As working parents realize this, many are passing up the traditional baby-sitter and turning to day-care centers.

In this answer the student discusses the advantages of day-care centers. The conclusion very effectively restates all the points that have been made. This technique is especially important on a test, when you want to present a logical, convincing, and easy-to-follow answer.

2. **Chronological Wind-up** When a piece of writing "tells a story," it is natural to have its final paragraph tie up all loose ends by ending with what happened last. Personal experience essays and stories narrated in the first person often use this method.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's fictional Dr. Watson, first-person narrator of Sherlock Holmes' adventures, concludes a story in this manner:

And that was how a great scandal threatened to affect the kingdom of Bohemia, and how the best plans of Mr. Sherlock Holmes were beaten by a woman's wit. He used to make merry over the cleverness of women, but I have not heard him do it of late. And when he speaks of Irene Adler, or when he refers to her photograph, it is always under the honourable title of *the* woman. ("A Scandal in Bohemia.")

Similarly, this student ends a personal experience essay with a chronological wind-up.

The next few years of my life passed quickly, probably because I was so busy. In the space of three years I got my equivalency diploma and held down three jobs—in sales, in the restaurant business, and in a men's clothing store. I also hitchhiked around the country. When I came back from my trip, I decided to return to school, and that's how I wound up in this English class, taking the first step toward getting a college degree.

The last paragraph of this essay ties all the loose ends together, leaving no room for further development. The student completes the narrative by bringing us up to the present.

**3. Illustration** To make an abstract or general conclusion more concrete and specific, you may choose to follow a broad restatement of your controlling idea with an example to illustrate it. A relevant news item can often serve this purpose. Similarly, a personal experience essay—or any story told in the first person—may conclude with an example that strikes a personal note.

You can make a general or abstract conclusion more convincing if you provide an analogy with another situation. A student essay about the perils of living at college concludes with this analogy:

In many ways, learning the ins and outs of living on campus is almost like taking a survival course. This training is not as thorough as what the army would put you through, but it comes close; it is learning survival in society instead of in the wilderness.

You can make a more formal essay clearer by adding a specific example in the conclusion to illustrate the re-

statement of the controlling idea. A student in an economics class ended a paper with a concrete example.

Despite the price gouging of oil companies and the reluctance of the Congress to formulate a coordinated domestic energy policy, there are some signs of hope. One such sign is a government study that recommends four encouraging options. The first is to put into effect a small program with limited rationing of oil resources. The second approach is to undertake a large project with emphasis on lower energy use and finding more domestic energy sources. The third option would be an all-out war against the energy problem. This would involve exploitation of shale oil, and immediate exploration and development of off-shore oil reserves. The fourth and final course would be a balanced ecologically oriented program that would attempt to cut down American energy use. Certainly, these courses of action do not solve our country's energy problems, but they do show that the government is finally approaching the issue in a more organized, methodical fashion than it has in the past.

By stating the government agency's "four options," the writer places his abstract ideas about "signs of hope" in perspective.

**4. Prediction** Writing designed to convince or persuade your readers may very naturally end with a prediction that takes the conclusion a step further than a summary. This type of conclusion does sum up the essay's main points, but it also enables the writer to make certain additional projections on the basis of those points.

An article on the likelihood of the Philadelphia Flyers' winning a third Stanley Cup championship centers on the extreme loyalty of Flyers fans, and concludes:

Of course, the Spectrum Store may have to prepare itself for a bargain sale Monday. But given the faith and pride of the fans in this city, those commemorative Stanley Cup mugs may simply be stashed away for another championship season. ("Flyers' Magic in Spectrum to Get Biggest Test Tonight," *New York Times*.)

In other words, after concluding that the Flyers will have a difficult time winning the finals, the writer predicts that the fans' loyalty will prevail despite the team's possible loss in the play-offs.

Students often use predictions as conclusions for essays and essay examinations. After discussing a series of facts on an economics exam, you might want to show how those facts might affect the future: "If some reforms are not immediately instituted in the Social Security system, there might be no money left for those of us who will be ready to collect our checks forty-five years hence." You can see the same strategy used in all kinds of writing from journal articles to student essays.

A nursing student ended his paper for a public health course with this prediction:

Even though there has not been a case of smallpox in the United States for years, children should still be vaccinated against this disease. Despite the assurances of many doctors to the contrary, some physicians still recommend this course of action. As far as this vocal minority is concerned, it is extremely likely that failure to immunize against smallpox could result in an outbreak of epidemic proportions just like the one that recently occurred in Somalia.

**5. Recommendation of a Course of Action** When you feel you have convinced your readers, you may want to recommend action. Writers of business correspondence are especially aware of the advantages of

ending their letters with an appeal for action. Advertisements plead, "Don't forget, before it's too late. Clip this coupon and send away now." In editorials or political speeches, the call for action is usually the writer's main purpose. In these and other kinds of persuasive writing, it can be psychologically very effective to conclude by appealing to the reader for action.

A recommended course of action is almost always a part of political writing. A notable example is the very effective final paragraph of Marx and Engels' *Communist Manifesto*:

The Communists disdain to conceal their views and aims. They openly declare that their ends can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions. Let the ruling class tremble at a Communist revolution. The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win.

Workingmen of all countries, unite!

Student writers also sometimes find occasion to recommend action. This paragraph concluded a student essay that discussed the harmful effects of food additives.

Every month the Food and Drug Administration finds that another food additive has harmful effects on humans. In spite of this, food processors seem reluctant to eliminate additives from their food. It seems as if the only way we, the consumers, will be able to make our desires felt is to stop buying food that contains artificial preservatives and flavor enhancers. It is time for us to take an active part in determining what we eat.

The writers' use of "Let" in the first example and "It is time" in the second is characteristic of this type of concluding strategy.

Letters applying for a job also often conclude with an appeal or a request for action. The ending may combine a summary of the writer's qualifications with a request for an interview.

Since I plan to make teaching my permanent career, I would be a diligent and dedicated worker. I feel that both my job experience and my educational background in teaching the handicapped uniquely qualify me for this position. I can come to Boise for an interview at any time that would be convenient for you.

**6. Quotation or Dialogue** As in the introduction, quotation can lend authority to a conclusion. Quotations by well-known authors can sometimes not only sum up your essay handsomely, but also enable you to use their distinctive writing styles to add variety and interest to your conclusion.

Professional writers and journalists use this strategy a great deal. Harrison Salisbury uses a quotation to end his essay "Print Journalism."

What is at stake was well said by Walter Lippmann in the aftermath of the Eastland case: "The . . . principle of the First Amendment was not adopted in order to favor newspapermen and to make them privileged characters. It was adopted because a free society cannot exist without a free press. The First Amendment imposes many duties upon newspapermen who enjoy the privileges of this freedom. One of the prime duties of free journalists is that they should, to the best of their abilities, preserve intact for those who come after them the freedom which the First Amendment guarantees." (*Playboy*.)

By using Walter Lippmann's statement, Salisbury sums up his ideas and adds clout to his argument.

Quotations can be put to good use in your own writing. This conclusion from a final exam answer uses the words of Kurtz, a character from Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, to sum up.

In its tone and its theme, *Heart of Darkness* illustrates Conrad's mixed attitude toward colonialism. On the one hand, he felt that the ideal represented by colonialism was good and noble. On the other hand, Conrad could not ignore the evils and abuses being committed by Europeans in Africa, evils best expressed by Kurtz in his final comment, "The Horror! The Horror!"

### Choosing the Best Conclusion

The following personal experience essay was written by a student for a class in freshman composition. Take special note of how its conclusion works.

#### Inexpensive but Priceless

I have a silver dollar that to me has more than just monetary value. I value it not just as a gift, but as the beginning of an important family tradition. Because of its symbolic value, the dollar is truly priceless.

My silver dollar has an interesting history. It was given to me two years ago by my oldest uncle. This uncle in turn received it from his oldest uncle some forty years ago. Now, it is starting to become customary for the oldest son to receive it from the oldest uncle in the family.

I see the silver dollar as representative of the unity that exists in my family. I recognize the fact that this silver dollar is just one dollar's worth of silver, but in another way it is worth much more than its face value. Money cannot buy a sense of the importance of family, and this dollar is a symbol of the unity in my family in much the same way as a wedding ring is. Where the ring stands for a binding of two peo-

ple to make a unit, the silver dollar stands for a long-lasting family tie.

I imagine that in the years to come I too will relinquish the silver dollar to my oldest nephew. But until then I will continue to carry it around with me wherever I go. And by carrying it around with me, I will be constantly reminded of the togetherness that exists in my family.

The conclusion is a combination of "prediction" and "chronological wind-up." Although adequate, it is too trite and too general to be fully effective. Because this is a personal experience essay, and the student is very familiar with the experiences he is describing, there is no good reason why its concluding paragraph should be so vague. To strengthen this essay, the conclusion needs to be made more concrete. One way to bring it to life is to write it using dialogue.

When my uncle first gave the coin to me, he seemed sorry to have to give it up. "I've gotten a lot of comfort from this silver dollar," he told me. "For months when I was in Korea it was the only link between me and the people I loved." He handed it over, smiling. "It's been good company," he said. "Now it's yours." And now that it's mine, I can be reminded of the togetherness that exists in my family just by jingling it in my pocket.

As soon as the uncle speaks, he becomes more real, more of an individual. Another way to make the situation more concrete and specific, as we have seen, is to illustrate it by comparison with another event or situation.

prediction and  
chronological  
wind-up

dialogue

### Illustration

### Recommendation of a Course of Action

#### EXERCISE 1

#### EXERCISE 2

In monarchies all over the world, family jewels are handed down from generation to generation. Some of these treasures, of course, are priceless gems; others have value because of their age. My silver dollar lacks the monetary value of a royal family's crown jewels, but it gives me a similar sense of security and continuity. Every time I touch it, I remember what it stands for, and who I am.

The writer of this essay obviously wants to make a point about the meaning of the coin, and also to extend the tradition to future generations. Just as a prediction was an appropriate way to end, an appeal for action, which also involves a commitment to the future, can also be effective.

Many young people today are alienated from their families. While I can understand how differences of opinion can tear families apart, I see that this has not happened in my own case. Maybe more families need to overcome politics and other differences with the kind of commitment symbolized by a loved object handed down from one generation to the next.

Now that you have read the original essay and three possible alternative ways to conclude it, decide which conclusion seems to work best. Be prepared to discuss why you made the choice you did.

The following essay on two of baseball's greats does a competent job of comparing and contrasting Babe Ruth and Hank Aaron. The concluding paragraph is a



straightforward restatement of the essay's controlling idea: that both Ruth and Aaron, despite basic differences in style and personality, shared certain enviable athletic accomplishments.

### Two Great Men

Baseball is one of America's finest pastimes, and Americans have always shown a great interest in this sport. Whenever people talk about baseball, one of the most exciting facets of the game, the home run, is always mentioned in the conversation. And when this part of the game is mentioned, two players' names always come to mind. These players are Babe Ruth and Hank Aaron, the greatest home run hitters in the history of the game.

Babe Ruth, known as "Mr. Baseball," is probably the most popular figure in the sport. He started his career as a pitcher who could swing a powerful bat, and this ability as a batter caused Babe to be converted into an outfielder. Eventually, he developed into the game's most feared home run hitter, leading the league in home runs in ten seasons and tying for the title in two. One season, Babe hit 60 home runs; in his lifetime, he hit 714. Sometimes, before a pitch, he would point his bat toward the seats in the outfield and then drill that pitch almost to the spot he had predicted. Babe became a legend, and many people thought his career home run count would never be surpassed.

In 1974 Babe's career home run record was broken by Hank Aaron. Hank, an outfielder, who was always a powerful hitter during his career, was not as well known a figure as Ruth even though he had been quietly replacing Babe as the game's most feared home run hitter. For one thing, he didn't play in the big city so he didn't get the publicity Ruth got. For another, the most home runs he hit during one season was 47. And Aaron would never do Ruth's canny trick of predicting home runs, because Hank was

not flamboyant like Ruth. Like Ruth, however, Aaron led the league in home runs during several seasons and Aaron too became a legend in his own time.

### Restatement

Babe Ruth and Hank Aaron are both American heroes. These two players have made almost the same accomplishments on their roads to success even though their personalities are quite different. They have contributed greatly to the success of baseball.

While the conclusion does leave the reader with a sense of completeness, it is neither dramatic nor memorable. Write three of the five possible alternatives to this restatement conclusion. Again, consider the relative strengths and weaknesses of each strategy.