FORMULATING A CONCLUDING SENTENCE FOR A PARAGRAPH

Why is a concluding sentence important in a paragraph? It is needed to show that the writer has completed what he wants to say and to leave in the reader's mind a final statement of the paragraph's main idea.

What is a concluding sentence? It pulls together or summarizes the main idea of the paragraph, usually in a single sentence. The concluding sentence also provides a definite ending point for the paragraph.

What can you do to make sure that your concluding sentence is effective, that it restates the main idea and makes the reader feel that the paragraph is complete? Just follow these suggestions the next time you write a paragraph:

1. End the paragraph with a concluding sentence that summarizes or restates the main idea as expressed in the topic sentence.
   Example: (topic sentence) - A grandfather is a very special person who has all of the good characteristics of a father but none of the faults.
   Example: (concluding sentence) - He will go to any length to plan special family gatherings at which grandfather is truly a grandfather.
   (This sentence provides a good conclusion by restating the topic sentence.)

2. Make sure that the concluding sentence does not introduce another subject that is not covered by the paragraph, which includes the concluding sentence. (Introducing another subject, which is not covered by the paragraph, will confuse the reader and weaken the ending.)

3. Remember to tailor the conclusion to the type of paragraph you are writing. (The conclusion for each kind of paragraph should be handled differently.) Suggestions for concluding each major type of paragraph are summarized below:
   A. In a "comparison/contrast" paragraph, include in the concluding sentence both of the subjects being compared/contrasted. This approach will reinforce the controlling idea of the topic sentence--in this case, the sharp contrast between two football coaches, "Bud" Wilkinson and "Bear" Bryant.
   Example: (concluding sentence) - The fact that these contrasting figures were two of the most successful coaches in football history proves that there is more than one way to inspire a football team.
   B. In a "descriptive" paragraph, use a concluding sentence to draw details together into a unifying impression, which restates the impression contained in the topic sentence. In a paragraph describing someone whose appearance radiated an easy-going sense of humor, the concluding statement could be stated as follows:
   Example: (concluding sentence) - Joe had the kind of laid-back humor that could brighten anyone's day.
C. In a “division/classification” paragraph, which classifies or breaks a topic into component parts, use a concluding sentence to focus the reader's attention on the topic as a whole, not on the last of the component parts discussed in the body of the paragraph. In a paragraph which analyzes the various ways to drive a one-man jet boat --sitting position, standing position, and kneeling position--the writer should conclude it with a statement that ties all of the parts (the whole paragraph) together.

Example: (concluding sentence) -The position you choose for operating a jet boat will depend on weather conditions. (This conclusion addresses all of the positions discussed in the paragraph.) As this example shows, don’t end your division/classification paragraph with a final detail concerning only a part of your analysis. Instead, formulate a concluding sentence that refers to the whole paragraph.

D. In a paragraph, which explains through the use of examples, the writer must supply a strong concluding sentence. This sentence should not be just another example--it should restate the topic sentence (controlling idea) and summarize all of the examples the writer has included in the paragraph. In a paragraph, which uses examples to explain how quickly a reputation can be destroyed, the conclusion should restate the same idea.

Example: (concluding sentence) -Reputation is, indeed, a fragile thing. It takes years to build but only a moment to lose. (This sentence restates the paragraph's main idea, not just one of the examples that the writer uses to show how fragile a reputation actually is.)

E. In a "narrative" paragraph--which tells a story with a definite point the writer needs a concluding sentence to reinforce the point being made. In a story, which is intended to show, how smart a particular horse is the concluding sentence might be stated as follows:

Example: (concluding sentence) -I'll agree that horses are beautiful but I'll never be convinced that they are stupid; Silver and I know better. (It's easy to see how the Lone Ranger feels when you read that conclusion.)

In all of these examples, the concluding sentence leaves the reader with a restatement of the paragraph's main idea. Without a good concluding sentence, the writer cannot end a paragraph effectively.