

Thesis Statements & Claims (AKA Topic Sentences)



Introduction:

One of the most challenging parts of adolescence is learning how to maintain a balanced, respectful relationship with one's parents while developing a sense of independence. The 2003 Disney film, *Finding Nemo*, is a popular children's movie that appeals to children and parents alike, due to its representation of a challenging relationship between a parent and a child. *Finding Nemo* is a tale of an adventurous young clownfish, Nemo, who ends up in an aquarium after neglecting to listen to his protective father. His father, Marlin, meets a forgetful fish named Dory, and the two embark on a treacherous journey through the sea in order to reunite with Nemo. Nemo's independent spirit clashes with his father's overprotective ways; however, their feud becomes insignificant once they are separated and fear never seeing each other again. **Throughout the film, the most important message that shines through is the complicated relationship between a father and his growing son. = THESIS**

What is the purpose? A thesis statement addresses the writing prompt and tells readers what you are going to prove in your body paragraphs!
***REMEMBER: this is going to be the last sentence of your introduction!**

Essay prompt: What is the most important message or theme in the film *Finding Nemo*?

Thesis: Throughout the film, the most important message that shines through is the complicated relationship between a father and his growing son.

Essay Prompt: What factors are responsible for the Beast's transformation in *Beauty and the Beast*?

Thesis: Belle is most responsible for the Beast's transformation; his relationship with her taught him generosity and kindness.

Effective Claims/Topic Sentences:

- Are arguable or debatable.
- ALWAYS relate to and support/prove your thesis.
- Do not summarize the literature or topic you are writing about.
- Are your own claims or original ideas.

Examples:

Thesis: Belle is most responsible for the Beast's transformation; his relationship with her taught him generosity and kindness.

**This essay would have two body paragraphs. What will each be about?*

Ineffective Topic Sentence/Claim: Belle is separated from her father when she tries to find him in the forest.

WHY is this ineffective?

Effective Topic Sentence/Claim: The Beast learns to be generous once he witnesses the positive impact of Belle's selflessness towards others in the castle.

WHY is this effective?

Thesis: Belle is most responsible for the Beast's transformation; his relationship with her taught him generosity and kindness.

Topic Sentence/Claim #1: The Beast learns to be generous once he witnesses the positive impact of Belle's selflessness towards others in the castle.

Topic Sentence/Claim #2: Write your own.

*Share ideas.

Thesis: Throughout the film, the most important message that shines through is the complicated relationship between a father and his growing son.

Let's discuss this prompt as a class!

Topic Sentence/Claim #1: Write your own with a partner

Topic Sentence/Claim #2: Write your own with a partner

Read the following essay prompt and outline a thesis and two claims that you could use in your essay.

Essay Prompt: In *Beauty and the Beast*, there is a clear conflict between Belle and Gaston. What is it about Gaston that makes Belle refuse to accept his marriage proposal?

Please write:

Thesis:

Topic Sentence/Claim #1:

Topic Sentence/Claim #2:

*Share and discuss ideas.

Conclusion Paragraphs

AKA The "So What?"
Paragraph



What is the purpose?

- Your conclusion paragraph should help your reader see the importance of your thesis and the evidence/analysis you provided in your essay. Basically, it should do just what its name suggests: it should effectively *conclude* your essay by accomplishing the following goals:
 - **Synthesize** (*combine multiple parts into a cohesive whole*) the main points of your essay. Don't simply restate the main ideas; instead, help your reader see how all your main points work together to prove an important point.
 - **Connect** the ideas of your essay with your reader's experience or life in general.

The “So What?” Paragraph

- Your main goal is to meaningfully answer the questions, “**Why does all this matter? So what?**” about your essay. Your essay has been about a *specific* idea, and your conclusion is where you connect and/or apply that idea to the **wider world** or to **life in general**. Discuss exactly *WHY* your ideas matter beyond the specifics of your essay.

SPECIFIC



GENERAL

Parts of a conclusion

- Remind readers of your thesis **WITHOUT REPEATING IT**
- Synthesize, and basically sum up, the main points of your essay
- Provide insight that **deepens** or **intensifies** the **significance** of your essay
 - Remember, “Why does this matter? So what?”
 - Aim for a universal/global idea that applies to the whole world or life in general
- General tips:
 - Avoid cliches such as “absence makes the heart grow fonder” or “when life gives you lemons, make lemonade.” **Be original!**
 - Don’t include new quotes/evidence
 - Leave readers with something thought provoking. Keep them thinking about your ideas!
 - End with a strong, meaningful last line!
 - **DO NOT** announce your ideas directly to your reader (for example, do not write, “My essay matters because...” or “This essay was about...”)

Conclusion Components

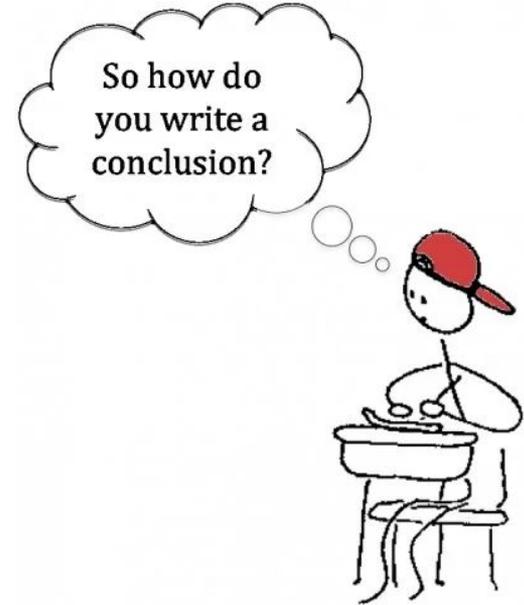
There is no single perfect structure for conclusions; they can be put together in different ways. If formulas help you, however, you may want to remember the following list of components to help you write and organize conclusions.

1. Remind your reader of your **thesis** (in different words!)
2. Discuss the **main points** of your essay. (Rather than listing them individually, work on discussing these main points in a *synthesized* way, so that all the ideas work together)
3. **“So what?”** Comment on why your essay is important for the whole world or life in general. (Remember, move from the specific to the general)

Feeling stuck? Try this:

Imagine you are simply sitting and talking with a friend this topic. You've been talking for a while, and finally your friend asks you, **“Why does this subject matter? What is the big deal?”**

- Your brilliant, eloquent, and insightful answer to this question should turn into your conclusion paragraph!

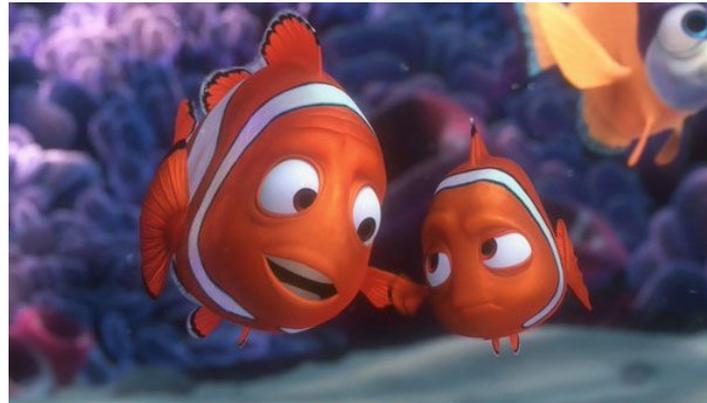


Let's look at an example...

Remember the Finding Nemo Introduction example? Here it is again:

One of the most challenging parts of adolescence is learning how to maintain a balanced, respectful relationship with one's parents while developing a sense of independence. The 2003 Disney film, *Finding Nemo*, is a popular children's movie that appeals to children and parents alike, due to its representation of a challenging relationship between a parent and a child. *Finding Nemo* is a tale of an adventurous young clownfish, Nemo, who ends up in an aquarium after neglecting to listen to his protective father. His father, Marlin, meets a forgetful fish named Dory, and the two embark on a treacherous journey through the sea in order to reunite with Nemo. Nemo's independent spirit clashes with his father's overprotective ways; however, their feud becomes insignificant once they are separated and fear never seeing each other again. Throughout the film, the most important message that shines through is the complicated relationship between a father and his growing son.

- Now, imagine you went on to write two phenomenal body paragraphs in support of this thesis, complete with strong examples and rich analysis.
- How would you write a conclusion for that essay? What should be included? What sorts of things should you focus on?



Example Conclusion - Finding Nemo essay

Adolescence is a challenging time of profound change and development. Adolescents often begin to long for a stronger sense of independence than they have ever had, and this can create unique conflicts with parents. One of *Finding Nemo's* major themes is the tense relationship between an adolescent son and his protective father. Nemo and his father Marlin struggle to strike a balance as Nemo craves independence and Marlin yearns to remain his son's protector. Ultimately, the two undergo a perilous adventure and realize just how precious their bond is, regardless of their sometimes conflicting impulses. Each individual grows into his or her identity in a unique way, and faces a unique set of challenges along the way. *Finding Nemo* demonstrates this delicate and complicated balance, reminding its audience of the importance of both individuality and togetherness.

Your turn! Give it a try

Remember this thesis?

Belle is most responsible for the Beast's transformation; his relationship with her taught him generosity and kindness.

And remember your topic sentences/claims to support this thesis?

- **Topic sentence/claim 1:** The Beast learns to be generous once he witnesses the positive impact of Belle's selflessness towards others in the castle.
- **Topic sentence/claim 2:** (You wrote your own!)

Now, work with a partner to write your own example conclusion paragraph for this hypothetical essay. Refer to your notes on conclusions and the previous example to help you