

CONCLUSIONS

Conclusions are more variable than introductions, and are the perfect place to drive home your message one last time, while also suggesting how your argument might pave the way for additional discussions of your topic in the future:

- 1) Start by restating the gist of your claim.
- 2) Explain its significance by answering the question *So What?* Answer in a more comprehensive way than you did in your introduction's cost/benefits section; after all, by this time your reader is more informed, since s/he has already read your (hopefully convincing) body paragraphs.
- 3) Suggest a further question or problem that needs to be resolved. In effect, you answer the question *Now What?*
- 4) End with an anecdote, question, or fact. If possible, it should balance your prelude. We call this the *coda*.

Those who claim that O'Connor was indifferent to racism fail to see how she saw past the surface of the black/white conflict to find a deeper crisis of faith—the modern failure to recognize the healing knowledge that comes from profound suffering. Indeed, these new insights into the human condition put her among a select few Southern writers who first saw the deep failure of the modern world to deal with human differences not just as economic or social problems, but as spiritual ones. Seen in this light, a rereading of her private correspondence would almost certainly show that her evangelical religion did not produce the high-and-mighty attitude that some biographers attribute to O'Connor's personality. Instead, her evangelicalism brought her closer to the problems of the world, and closer to how she herself could offer solutions.

[Note: This writer does not include a coda. If we wanted to add one, we might include a quote from O'Connor's correspondence.]

Source: From Joseph Williams and Gregory Colomb, *The Craft of Argument*, New York: Longman, 2001. pp. 86-88.