

THE RECIPE FOR A GOOD CONCLUSION

The conclusion to a scientific investigation is the most important part of the write-up. The conclusion summarizes why you were doing the investigation, what you discovered, and what that data means. Follow the steps below to write a thorough, complete conclusion to any investigation.

STEP 1. What was the original question?

- Start the paragraph by answering the original question for the investigation. Restate the question in your answer. You should NOT say, "The question to the lab was...". Simply start the conclusion by answering the question.
- This could be one sentence long.

STEP 2. What was the hypothesis?

- Restate the hypothesis. This should NOT be a word-for-word quote from your lab notebook. Restate the hypothesis so that the reader knows what kind of data you were collecting and what you thought the answer to the original question would be.
- This could be one sentence long.

STEP 3. What evidence did you gather to that allowed you to answer the question?

- This is where you summarize the data collected and/or the calculations you made and/or the interpretation to the graph. Depending on your investigation, it may make sense to summarize only one of those things listed or to summarize all three.
- To "summarize" does NOT mean listing all of your data. You want to summarize key aspects of the data. For example, you may compare how the data collected changed from the start to the end of the investigation. For example, you may compare how calculations of rate or mass changed from start to finish of the investigation. For example, you may explain the shape of a graph and interpret its meaning.
- You must provide actual qualitative (visual observations) and/or quantitative data (numeric measurements or calculations) at this point. These data are your evidence!
- This is often 2-4 sentences long, depending on your investigation.

STEP 4. Does this data (evidence) support your hypothesis?

- In science, hypotheses aren't proven or disproven, they are only either supported or refuted by evidence. "Supporting" a hypothesis means your hypothesis was right. "Refuting" a hypothesis means your hypothesis was wrong.
- You must write a statement saying whether the data "support" or "refute" your hypothesis.
- This is where you add any additional information to help explain WHY the data either supports or refutes your hypothesis.
- This is often 1-2 sentences long.

STEP 5. Did you edit your work?

- Put steps 1-4 together in one paragraph.
- Reread the paragraph to make sure the language flows nicely and makes sense.
- Check for and fix spelling or grammar errors.

Keep in mind that this five-step recipe is simply a guideline to follow for a well-written conclusion. However, depending on your investigation, your conclusion might be longer or shorter than you'd expect and not follow the sentence-length expectations stated above.

YOU TRY IT!

Fill in the blanks using information from your scientific method lab. Read the instructions on the opposite side of this page and be sure to include all the important pieces you need to write a good conclusion.

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STEP 3. What evidence did you gather to that allowed you to answer the question?

STEP 4. Does this data (evidence) support your hypothesis?

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