

DRAFTING A CONCLUSION

You can build your conclusion around the elements of your introduction, in reverse order.

1. Restate your claim early in your conclusion, more fully than in your introduction:

Bingeing college students may be irrational when they ignore risks that they know well, but they are not acting without some reason. Our survey shows that students more likely to binge hear and remember more stories of bingeing among their peers than do students less likely to binge. As a consequence, bingers believe that bingeing is far more prevalent than it is. And since they are unlikely to know anyone who has suffered direct harm from bingeing, they believe that their chances of being harmed are quite low.

2. Remind readers of the significance of your claim or, better, state a new significance or a practical application:

These findings suggest bingeing may be less irrational, less a matter of uncontrollable impulses than at first it might seem. If one cause of bingeing is the common practice of bragging about one's exploits at parties and bars, it may be possible to counter the effects of those stories with simple facts. If students know that bingeing is not the norm among students, they may think more carefully when they assess its risks.

3. Finally, suggest other questions that your results might raise:

Although these results improve our understanding of the causes of bingeing, they do not tell us how to counter the effects of overestimating the prevalence of bingeing. There is no evidence to show that we can counter the effects of vivid and exciting stories told by peers with dry facts recited by college administrators. There is more research to do before we can know how to use these results effectively.