

Scientific Writing: What is a Conclusion?

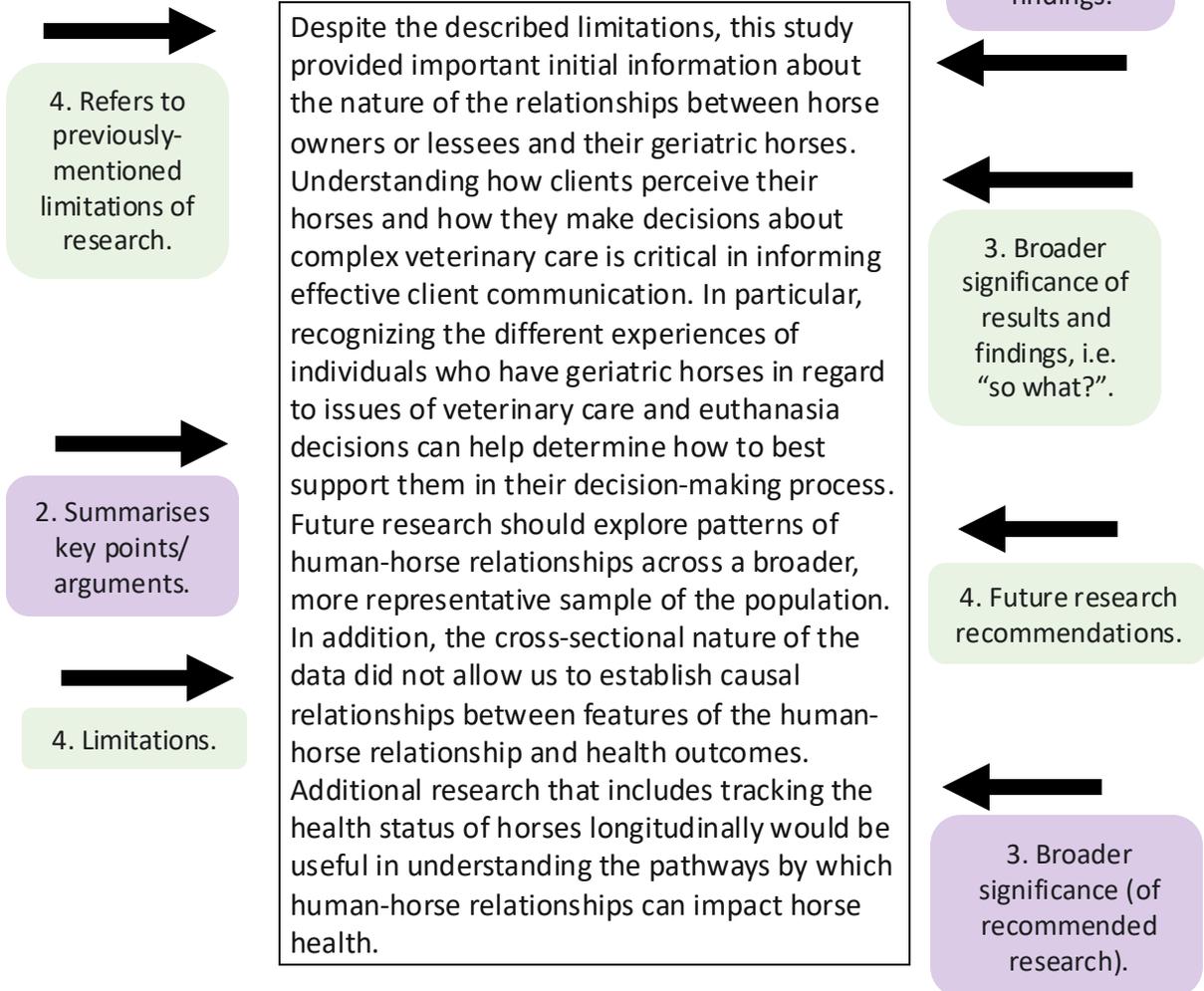
The final paragraph or section of your scientific work. This is your opportunity to reflect on and bring together all the strands of your research, so that your ideas and results make sense to readers. The conclusion is also the final opportunity for you to present your findings/ arguments to readers so that you may convince them of its validity. Below is a basic structure that may help you:

1. Re-state your key findings (not verbatim).
2. Summarise the main points/ highlights/ solutions to key problems.
3. State the broader significance of your ideas/ findings. Ask yourself: “so what?” and “why should the reader care?”
4. You may address any limitations in your research (e.g. scope) and/or make further research/ application recommendations (e.g. remaining gaps).

What to Avoid in a Conclusion:

- Presenting **new information or evidence**, i.e. such information and evidence should have been introduced and examined in the Methods/Materials, Results, and and Discussion sections already.
- **Repetitive language or phrasing**, i.e. vary your vocabulary and examine your ideas and findings from different angles.
- Simply **rephrasing the introduction**, i.e. while the introduction and conclusion often mirror one another in terms of content, remember that they have different and bespoke functions in academic writing. See the UCD Writing Centre’s handout on scientific introductions for more information.
- Overtly **vague or generalised statements**, i.e. your findings and subsequent arguments/points will be more convincing if they are focused and specific.
- Making overtly **sentimental or emotional appeals**, i.e. maintain a professional/ critical tone. Stick to the facts that you have presented, as well as to the logical interpretations and conclusions you have deduced based on critical analysis.
- Summarising with **personal opinions**, i.e. maintain critical objectivity here as elsewhere in your work. Again, claims should be based on logical deductions based on critical analysis. See the UCD Writing Centre’s handout on critical analysis for more information.
- **Concluding too hastily**, i.e. it can be tempting to rush at the end of your assignment, but remember that this is the last impression the reader will have of your work. Take your time.
- Using **clichéd phrasing** such as “in summary” or “in conclusion”, i.e. given that this is the final paragraph/ section of your work, the fact that it is a conclusion to the work is already implied.
- **Selling your ideas short**, i.e. you are still convincing your reader of the validity of your findings/points, so conclude with confidence by avoiding such phrases as “hopefully”, “maybe”, “perhaps”, etc. Be bold about the results you have found and any claims you have made on the back of those findings.

Example



TIP: You will notice that the example above uses the Page 1 recommendations out of order. Remember, you do not have to adhere to a strict chronology; these are recommendations

Mueller, Megan Kiely, et al. "Survey of Human-Horse Relationships and Veterinary Care for Geriatric Horses", *Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association*, vol. 253, no. 3, pp. 337-345.