ENDINGS: A DOZEN SUGGESTIONS*

Here are a few ideas on how to end an essay:

1. Write a final paragraph or sentence that completes the logical pattern that the essay is developing.
2. Try rephrasing and reasserting the main thesis.
3. Give a concluding opinion supported by the previous discussion.
4. Use a speculative question or statement that leaves the subject open for further thought.
5. Try musing upon the broader implications of the topic.
6. Return to the theme, question, or image from the opening paragraph so the essay is rounded out.
7. Use an ironic twist or unexpected turn of thought.
8. Sound a note of high persuasion or challenge.
9. Provide an appropriate anecdote.
10. Use a telling quotation.
11. Create a descriptive passage, with the setting as a final commentary.
12. Use humor to create a laugh.

Here are some types of endings that are best avoided:

- **The obvious ending**
  The phrase “In conclusion” is the most obvious of endings. Characteristically, readers don’t like to be told the obvious. If the organization of an essay has been thoughtfully developed, the ending is self-evident without a special announcement.

- **The postscript**
  A postscript is simply a thought that the author adds after the ending has already been reached. If the form of the essay has been fully developed, the reader knows where the ending is. A postscript may not necessarily be an irrelevant thought, but it is unsatisfying because it is misplaced in the development of the essay proper. An afterthought, therefore, is better dropped altogether or integrated into the total pattern of the essay.

*Taken from: The Holt Guide to English by William F. Irmscher.*