

CREATING ACTIVITIES FOR CONCLUDING THE LESSON

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Annotation: In this article Closure is the step where you wrap up a lesson plan and help students organize the information in a meaningful context in their minds. This helps students better understand what they have learned and provides a way in which they can apply it to the world around them.

Key words: materials, compare and contrast, summarizing a lesson, information, audience's memory.

A strong closure can help students better retain information beyond the immediate learning environment. A brief summary or overview is often appropriate; it doesn't have to be an extensive review. A helpful activity when closing a lesson is to engage students in a quick discussion about what they learned and what it means to them.

Writing an Effective Closure Step

It is not enough to simply say, "Are there any questions?" in the closure section. Similar to the conclusion in a five-paragraph essay, look for a way to add some insight and/or context to the lesson. It should be a meaningful end to the lesson. Examples of real-world usage can be a great way to illustrate a point, and one example from you can inspire dozens from the class. Look for areas of confusion that students might experience, and find ways in which you can quickly clarify them. Reinforce the most important points so that the learning is solidified for future lessons. The closure step is also a chance to do an assessment. You can determine whether students need additional practice or whether you need to go over the lesson again. It allows you to know that the time is right to move on to the next lesson.

You can use a closure activity to see what conclusions the students drew from the lesson to ensure they are making the appropriate connections to the materials. They could describe how they can use what they learned in the lesson in another setting. For example, ask students to demonstrate how they would use the information in solving a problem. Ensure that you have a selection of problems ready to use as prompts. Closure can also preview what the students will learn in the next lesson, providing a smooth transition. This helps students make connections between what they learn from day to day.

Closure can take a number of forms. For example, for a lesson about plants and animals, tell students to discuss new things that they have learned about plants and animals. This should produce a lively conversation where students can meet in small groups or as an entire class, depending on what is best for your particular group.

Alternatively, ask students to summarize the characteristics of plants and animals and explain how they compare and contrast. Have students write examples on the board or in their notebooks. Other possible closure activities include:

- Asking students what information from the lesson they think they will find important three years from now and why. This would work better with upper-primary-grade students.

- Using exit tickets. Have students write what they learned, as well as any questions they might still have, on a slip of paper with their name. As they leave the class, they can place their responses in bins labeled as to whether they understood the lesson, need more practice or information, or need more help. You can label these bins: "Stop," "Go," or "Proceed with Caution."

- Asking students to summarize the lesson as they would explain it to a classmate who was absent. Give them a couple of minutes and then either have them turn in the summaries for you to read or have a few present their writings to the class.

You can also have students write several yes/no questions of key points from the lesson, then pose the questions to the class for a quick thumbs up or thumbs down for each one. These yes-no questions will show how well the class understood those points. If there is confusion, you will know which points of the lesson you need to clarify or reinforce.

In an effective closure, the teacher will use strategies that include reviewing and summarizing a lesson, consolidating key information, creating a link to new ideas and building anticipation for the next lesson. During a good closure, the students will be given an opportunity to express any concerns, ask questions and clarify their own understandings. It will also give students the chance to celebrate and share any personal achievements with their peers. Closing a lesson can also be used as an assessment tool for the teacher, indicating whether the students understood the lesson objective or if the teacher needs to alter the delivery of their lesson or pull a small group to address any misconceptions students may have after the lesson. As a teacher, it is important to keep an eye on the clock and manage your lesson to ensure you have adequate time for the essential closure.

Pair your students off, and tell them to imagine they were writing “headlines” that summarize what they learned. Challenge each pair to write at least two headlines, then come back together to review the headlines. Alternatively, you can do this as an entire class activity, writing the headlines suggested by students on your whiteboard.

In general, readers (or listeners) remember your Introduction and your Conclusion much longer than they remember the points developed in the Body of your essay (or speech). They remember the Introduction because that is what first caught their attention; they remember your Conclusion because that is the last thing they read (or heard).

Conclusions, then, are important. For most essays or speeches, an effective conclusion performs at least three functions: It provides a summary of your major points (thus reinforcing them in your audience's memory). It provides a sense of closure (the essay or speech feels as though it is finished). A reference to something from the Introduction often provides this sense of closure, giving a sense of things coming full circle. It provides a "discovery" for the reader by making explicit some idea that has been implicit throughout the essay. This discovery might be the explicit connection between your major ideas, or it might be an implication of your thesis that you have not yet discussed. In scientific and technical writing, it could even be a recommendation for future research or stating the questions that have not yet been answered by your document. Please note that this discovery should never be a completely new idea, for ending with a new topic prevents the sense of closure and makes the essay seem incomplete.

For every Introduction strategy, there is a corresponding Conclusion strategy. For instance, if you begin with a quotation, your Conclusion might refer back to that quotation, or might include another quotation by the same writer. If you begin with a concession, your Conclusion might explain why the point you conceded earlier is less significant than it might first have appeared to be. If you began with a paradox, your Conclusion might refer back to that paradox.

It goes without saying that to have a productive lesson, teachers should start it with an interesting and effective warm — up. But what about ending the lesson as effectively as it has been started? The end of the lesson is equally important as its beginning. If you end a lesson just at the last exercise saying goodbye, your students will probably have the feeling that something is not completely finished. Hence, being a teacher requires to be creative and think of useful ways of ending your lesson.

Asking your students to give a feedback may really turn out to be a useful way of finishing the lesson. It gives them an opportunity to think over the learnt material, to sum up, and to share their opinion.

Students might complete the sentences:

If you work with a group, you can choose several students and ask them to talk about what they learnt during the lesson, what was interesting for them, what part they liked most. They can also give a brief summary of a story they read or listened to. If you studied "Past Simple" or "be going to", you can ask them to tell their classmates what they did yesterday or what they are going to do after the classes.

To develop your kids' and teenagers' critical thinking you can use pair/share activity at the end of the lesson. Ask your students to tell the person next to them things they have learnt today, then the groups report out.

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