

General

In a conclusion, you give a summary, then usually some reference to the future. It includes similar information to the thesis statement, but is more opinionated.

Summary¹

A conclusion begins with a summary of your main points. You often relate these to the key words in the title to show the reader how you have answered the question. Note how the writer summarises the 2nd paragraph^a; here, the 3rd paragraph^b, and here the 4th paragraph^c.

Future reference²

You usually end a conclusion with a recommendation, warning, prediction etc – some reference to the future.

Tone

Conclusions should be quite opinionated. Words like ‘early optimism’, ‘dissipate’, ‘alienated’, ‘inflexible’, ‘hamstrung’ and ‘difficult’ are all negative, and suggest failure. This relates to ‘successful’ in the title.

Conclusion language

You can use synonyms to avoid repeating words; eg, the idea of ‘people’ and ‘public’ in the 2nd and 3rd paragraphs becomes ‘man in the street’ in the conclusion.

As for grammar, the present perfect³ is useful for results; conditionals⁴ are useful for recommendations and predictions; modals⁵ are also useful for predictions, and also judgements.

Progression

In academic writing, you do repeat things – in the thesis sentences, the topic sentences etc - so the skill is to be clear, but not too repetitive. Style helps here; using a variety of vocabulary, grammar and sentence types.

See also; grammar units

Past 1/conditionals 1

Has the Euro been successful?

In January 2002, the Euro was finally introduced across Europe as the common currency of 12 member states. It was a hugely ambitious project, and though it is too early to say for definite if it will be a success or not, it is nevertheless useful to judge its performance so far. To do this, this essay will look at the Euro in terms of its impact on individuals, and then in terms of its impact on governments.

For many people, the actual introduction of the Euro was an undoubted success. It was a massive operation to switch from various currencies to a single one, and most commentators, and also the public, believe that the operation went smoothly. Various surveys back this point up, with public support in the Netherlands for example put at 72% in the early months of this year (Neilson, 2001). In terms of logistics, therefore, the Euro has to be judged a success.

However, this early public support has not been maintained. For many people across Europe, the introduction of the Euro has led to price rises in many everyday goods. In Germany, for example, restaurant prices have risen by as much as 33%, and in supermarket goods by 21% (Clarke, 2002). This has been repeated across Europe, and in Netherlands for example, consumers feel so strongly on the issue that now, 98% of the population would prefer to return to their old money (Clarke, 2002). Even though inflation, a much more reliable indicator of price rises, has actually remained stable, people, rightly or wrongly, feel the Euro has failed them, at least when it comes to their daily shopping.

Finally, there is the impact of the Euro on governments. To harmonise the various economies, the ‘Stability Pact’ was introduced, largely at the insistence of Germany. Under this, no country can have a deficit of more than 3% of its GDP. However, this particular rule has caused problems for many countries, ironically for Germany especially. For a variety of reasons, Germany wants to commit to large scale spending, but the terms of the pact prevent it from doing so. It is not alone. Portugal, France and Italy are also having problems abiding by the agreement. All of this suggests that perhaps the Euro and all that it entails, is fundamentally flawed as presently established, and needs radical reform to be successful.

It is early days to pass judgement. However, it seems clear that the early optimism that greeted the Euro has been dissipated^{1a}. Price rises in common goods have alienated³ the man in the street^{1b}, and inflexible rules have hamstrung governments who find themselves in difficult circumstances^{1c}. The Euro may⁵ indeed be the basis of future European prosperity and if⁴ it is, the above will be seen as mere teething problems. However, on the basis of its performance so far, it cannot⁵ yet be judged a success².

Summary

Future reference