

WRITING CONCLUSIONS

THE ART OF ENDINGS

“Don’t write endings, find them...
Endings grow from beginnings
and reveal themselves through clues
within the story, characters, or ideas.”

Barry Lane, *Reviser’s Toolbox*

GOOD ENDINGS

- Show how characters' feelings have changed
- Show what characters have learned
- Show a decision a character made
- Show strong images
- Use humor or strong feelings

TYPES OF CONCLUSIONS

- Classic Denouement
- Twist
- Epilogue
- Ambiguous
- Full Circle

CLASSIC DENOUEMENT

- Unraveling
- Mysteries are solved
- We know what happens to the characters
 - Often tells the main theme of the book
 - Doesn't have to be happy
- Example: Charlotte's Web – Charlotte dies, Wilbur saves her egg sac.
- “Wilbur never forgot Charlotte. Although he loved her children and grandchildren dearly, none of the new spiders ever quite took her place in his heart. She was in a class by herself. It is not often that someone comes along who is a true friend and a good writer. Charlotte was both.”

TWIST

- A surprise is revealed
 - Clues must be hidden in the story
 - Be purposefully deceptive
 - Example: two characters giving a ghost tour, but one is actually a ghost!
-
- NO! It was NOT a dream!

EPILOGUE

- Tells what happens to the characters after the story
- Lets us see how characters changed
- Can tell about days, months, or years later
- Example: Harry Potter – what happens 19 years later

AMBIGUOUS

- Not clear what happened
- The author still needs to know how it ends
- Clues can point to two or more different endings
- Example: The Giver – did Jonas reach safety?
- Makes the reader keep thinking about the story

FULL CIRCLE

- Goes back to the beginning
- “If you give a mouse a cookie...”
- My example: starts with tugging on loose thread, ends with grandma fixing the thread
- Show how your character reacts to the same situation differently after changing.

DON'T DO THESE

- It was only a dream!
- And then a giant eagle swooped down and rescued them!
- Twist without clues – I was really a vampire!
- A long description of unrelated details (Then I went out to dinner and ordered...)
- “The end.”