

WRITING DEVELOPMENT

RULE #1: If anything I say on this page conflicts with what your teachers have told you, I am wrong, and they are right.

Johnson's 'Great Society'

20. Conclusions

Pupils are generally poor at writing conclusions to their essays – they either finish with some bland truism effectively restating the question, or simply repeat ideas they have already said. This will earn you no marks – YOU NEED SOMETHING NEW!

In Writing Development exercise #17 on Civil Rights, we planned a typical essay analysing the legal achievements of the Civil Rights Movement, thus:

Conjunction	Event/development	Explain the importance/significance	Proving information	Links to...
The first ...	1. 1946 Civil Rights Ctee Recommended anti-lynch/ desegregation of travel/ fair employment/ Commission	FAILED: Congress refused to enact.	Black Americans still lacked Civil Rights	5
Next, ...	2. <i>Brown v Topeka</i> .....	.....	Chief Justice Warren stated that 'separate but equal' was unconstitutional	5
.....	3. 1957 Civil Rights Act	LIMITED: not enforced, and <i>white voters in the south</i> <i>tightened up literacy tests and</i> <i>intimidation.</i>	.....	6
.....	4. <i>Simkins v. Moses H. Cone Memorial Hospital</i> Established desegregated health care was illegal	.....	.....	5
.....	5. 1964 Civil Rights Act .....	.....	Enforcement mechanism weak.	1, 2, 4
Finally, ...	6. Voting Rights Act .....	.....	.....	3

You will see that I have added a fifth column, which lists links between the paragraphs. In this specific case we might say that:

Brown v Topeka provided the legal basis for desegregation in the 1964 Civil Rights Act.

The 1964 Civil Rights Act enacted what the 1946 Committee and *Simkins v. Moses H Cone* failed to achieve.

The Voting Rights Act achieved what the 1957 Civil Rights Act failed to do.

ie, we have just written a 'basic paragraph' of the kind you learned in Writing Development exercise #18. So now all you have to do to write a concluding paragraph with some relevant new information is to improve the three 'basic sentences' above using the following ideas:

- i.* Start with a topic sentence introducing the idea of the paragraph
- ii.* Expand sentences by adding factual information
- iii.* Vary vocabulary
- iv.* Use subordinating conjunctions and an appositive
- v.* Explain how this information helps us weigh the importance of the different factors
- vi.* End with a concluding sentence saying which event seems the most important.

This produces an excellent final paragraph if you are writing an essay on a topic with multiple aspects, and will be PARTICULARLY useful for AQA students writing an essay discussing 'which was the more important reason'.