

## How to work on Conclusion Statement #1?

Here's how I would do it... 😊 Jim

**Let's do some thinking about conclusions work statement #1. If you get the hang of this first item in your take-home final you're on the road to success with the work you need to do on all three conclusions statements!**

The **first step** is to isolate the actual conclusion statement from the story and setting that surrounds it. I have highlighted each conclusion statement in **bold red** in the assignment forms to help you do this. The story and setting are there only to provide some interesting detail and potentially believable background. Here's conclusion statement #1 itself:

**Despite some inventions and discoveries since ancient times things really haven't improved much in the way artists paint paintings.**

In one very general way, this statement might be considered true. If for example you very generally described "the way artists produce paintings" as "a person puts some kind of colors on a surface to create an image" then maybe you could say not much has changed in the last few thousands of years—that's in very general terms what an artist does. *But the statement is not really general in nature because it specifically mentions "inventions and discoveries" and it mentions "improved."* That has to provoke more thought. If you have learned much of anything in this course you realize that many inventions and discoveries have provided craftsmen and artists a lot of things that improved the range of colors available and access to them, and improved the permanence, safety, and convenience of the painting process. Also, some things were learned and codified that enabled the production of realistic images (the scientific perspectives). So without even getting into too much detail it should be apparent why I am telling you that this statement is **false**. *(Yes, I have given you that answer!)*

Realize the every word in that statement is important! One thing that students often miss in a statement like this is the ending words. Here, the crucial word is **paintings**. It's common for at least some students in the course to overlook the fact that this statement limits itself to paintings, which are **one particular form of art**... paintings are:

- not sculpture
- not architecture
- not stained glass
- not illuminated manuscripts
- not silverpoint or other types of drawings
- not engravings (intaglio) images or other printing processes.

Just paintings! Paintings are the **focus** of this statement. Paintings are paints applied to some kind of two-dimensional flat surface, such as cave walls, wooden panels, or a type of heavy cloth we call canvas stretched on a wooden frame to form a taut surface. If you

respond with facts irrelevant to this limiting part of the statement those facts are moot, that is, they are worth nothing in responding to this conclusions statement! Statements #2 and #3 may (or may not!) have analogous constraining words! So read **all** of each statement!

So, **second step**: make sure you understand the focus of the conclusion statement.

**Third step**: back off from the statement itself and get a grasp of the bigger picture it relates to. In this case, it's "improved". Have things changed in regard to painting in a way that somehow improves upon the process or the result? To explore this, ask yourself, **WHAT** could have changed? Well—what's involved with painting? I can think of these kinds of tasks:

- **What** the artist applies to the cave wall or wooden panel or canvas to create an image, and what surface is used for the painting
- **How** the artist "maps out" or sketches the image—that is, what tools guide the work?
- **Who** is involved in the painting process (assistants, models, or just the open air?)

Since the statement itself mentions "inventions and discoveries" it's natural to think about and identify some of those and then combine them with the tasks we've identified to determine how they changed and improved what the painter does. Here are some inventions and discoveries that come to mind, which have been identified as facts in your USFs (or should have been!) and have been written into your reflective essay story (or should have been!):

- Colorants
  - People in Lascaux used whatever they could find in the way of colorful rocks and earth, charcoal from burnt bones, and either no binder or animal fat or water or some bodily fluid to rub images onto cave walls. As a result the range of colors they could use was very limited.
  - Egyptians mixed natural minerals and heated them to produce new colorants, giving artists more colors to work with.
  - The Greeks invented ways to make additional colors.
  - The Romans used some toxic compounds like mercury and arsenic to make more colors and used these, even though they were dangerous to be around.
  - As trade expanded new colorants from the Far East become available in Italy and the rest of Europe, again expanding the colors available to the artist.
  - In the Enlightenment and beyond, science was used to create new colorants that were safer, more colorfast, and ultimately became available pre-made in portable tubes, giving artists an almost unlimited range of colors.
- Binders (remember: paint = colorant + binder!)
  - In late Egyptian, Greek, and Roman times egg yolk began to be used as a binder, instead of other fluids. This made painting easier (why? Why was egg

yolk better than water?) But egg tempera usually required an assistant to keep making more paint because this kind of binder dries relatively quickly.

- In the Renaissance it was found that oil was a superior binder because it took much longer to dry, giving the artist more time to work and less in need of constant assistance to make more paint. It is also translucent so an underlying layer of paint could show through a thin layer placed over it, giving a much greater range of color and appearance.
- Tools
  - The Greeks discovered that the Golden Rectangle tends to produce pleasing shapes, and found it in many natural objects and the proportions of the human body, and also made images more lifelike by foreshortening, a very early and simple form of linear perspective.
  - In the Middle Ages silverpoint became a convenient way to develop the sketch for an intended painting on a surface, with the advantage that it would not smudge but would not show through the paint either.
  - During the Renaissance the five scientific perspectives were invented (discovered?) that gave the artist vastly more powerful ways to plan and sketch an image to make it realistic, and to give the appearance of depth to a two-dimensional surface in the painting process.
  - During the late Romantic, Pre-Raphaelite movement, and Impressionist era photography became available and was refined and ultimately popularized. It could and was used by an artist to capture an image as it existed rather than to try to recall it entirely from sketches or memory, so a new range of composition technique eventually developed.
- Do painters have assistants, or is painting a solo activity?
  - Before oil paints, that is, in using egg tempera, a painter needed an assistant to constantly make more paint since the paint dried very fast, or he had to do this himself, interrupting the task of actually painting the image. The assistant also had to prepare colorants in advance or during the painting process by grinding things that formed the colorants.
  - When oil came to be used as a binder, an assistant was still needed to grind colorants and mix the binder with the colorants as the artist worked, but the artist had more time to develop detail and shading to make a painting more realistic.
  - When the range of colorants was expanded with chemistry during the Enlightenment and beyond and synthetic colorants were developed, it became possible for artists to simply purchase ready-made paints in an expanded range of colors, and to carry these in the small metal tubes in which they were sold so they could work “en plein air” in the countryside—in other words, to

escape the studio and take an easel to the location or scene the artist wanted to capture, without any type of assistant at all.

Count the facts above and you'll see that there are 15 of them. And you might even think of others in the eras you have lived through in your essay/story. All you need are 10 facts to substantiate your true/false determination in your logical argument. To choose from the facts available, pick the most powerful, that is, the 10 that seem to have had the greatest impact in changing the way an artist creates a painting. There is some subjectivity in this, and different people will no doubt have a different list of 10 facts. Great!

But in the case of each fact you cite, keep in mind that it's not enough to just say, for example,

"The Greeks used foreshortening the Golden Rectangle and, and the Romans used toxic compounds."

***Just to state raw facts like that isn't good enough because it assumes that the person you are trying to convince knows how those things improved the way the artist created a painting.*** Your audience might not know that. Rather, you need to tell your audience HOW these things changed the way the artist worked, and WHY this was important—**what the improvement was.** For example, something like this:

"The Greeks used their eyes to visualize images rather than following old Egyptian rules about painting just presenting information. They created images taking foreshortening into account, making images more realistic. The Greeks also learned that the Golden Rectangle was a visually-pleasing shape, and used its proportions in many of their ceremonial temples. The Romans expanded the range of colors available to artists although some of the compounds they found useful as colorants were known to be toxic."

**Do you see? In order to make a convincing argument here that statement #1 is false, you need to not only indicate a fact; you also have to explain how it changed and improved the way an artist could produce a painting.**

With this help from me you should be able to do these things:

1. Identify ten powerful facts about discoveries and inventions that changed the way artists produce paintings.
2. Describe in each case how those discoveries and inventions affected and improved the artist's ability to paint, and/or the result.
3. Check the facts against your essay/story and see that you (your character) has mentioned each of the needed facts. If facts are missing, revise the essay to include them with your character observing the changes in action or learning of them from someone else he/she talks with.
4. Write a logical argument that includes the facts and the effect of each discovery or invention on the work of an artist. You need not copy the verbiage of your essay in your argument, just mention it and describe how it changed and improved the work of the artist. Include an endnote citation [n] after you mention each fact. The

endnote number [n] will appear in ascending order in your logical argument. Why? Because these are just “pointers” to the list (the endnotes) that follows the prose of your logical argument!

5. When you include an endnote citation in your argument, drop down on the form and, in the corresponding endnote number, indicate the page number of your essay on which the fact is located. (So it’s obvious from this that your essay needs to be paginated, that is, have page numbers. If you don’t know how to have your word processor paginate your writing, for crying out loud get real and Google and figure that out and do it! In this day and age that is something you should have learned somewhere along the line way before now, like in middle school?)

When you have accomplished this, send me a copy of your essay as it stands after this work, and your completed Conclusions Statement #1 form. I will read both and will give you a grade and feedback on this work as quickly as possible, which can help you with the work you must do on conclusions work statements #2 and #3. Note that it’s common for many students to make minor revisions (additions) to their essay as they complete the conclusions work!

I explained much earlier in the course that I teach this course with a “mentoring” pedagogy, and that every assignment—including the take-home final exam—is a learning experience, not just an “assessment”. To make it so, you must do the work soon enough for me to be able to give you feedback and for you to have the time to revise and resubmit if necessary.

**So pay attention to the two deadlines for this course for this term:**

- **the FEEDBACK DEADLINE by which you must submit work if you intend to take advantage of the opportunity to receive my feedback and use it to revise and resubmit work for re-grading**
- **the ULTIMATE DEADLINE which occurs a few days later, which is the last date you can submit work to count for any grade credit. See the course web site for these specific dates for the current term.**