

Argumentative Essay

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Created by: Chris Kildegaard

An Argumentative, or position, essay is a common genre of academic writing. It requires you to investigate a topic; collect, create, and evaluate evidence; and then establish a position on the topic in a concise manner. Essentially, your goal as a writer is to convince your readers of your position, or at least convince them to give your position thought and consideration, through organized discussion and grounded evidence.

WHAT YOU SHOULD INCLUDE IN YOUR ESSAY:

A clear, concise, and defined thesis statement that occurs in the first paragraph of the essay.

- First, set the context by reviewing the topic in a general way.
- Next, explain why the topic is important or why readers should care about the issue.
- Lastly, state your thesis. It is essential that this thesis statement be appropriately narrow. If there is nothing to argue against, then it isn't a strong thesis. *For instance, who would argue that the sky is often blue or most people fear death?*

Clear and logical transitions between the introduction, body, and conclusion.

Without a logical progression of thought, it will be difficult for the reader to follow the essay's argument, and the structure will collapse. Transitions should wrap up the idea from the previous section and introduce the idea that is to follow in the next section.

Body paragraphs that connect to and support your thesis.

- Each paragraph in the body of the essay must have some logical connection to the thesis statement in the opening paragraph.
- Some paragraphs will directly support the thesis statement with evidence collected during research.
 - You might include a counterargument paragraph that speaks to the opposing view to provide context for your own argument. However, be sure to explain clearly **why** the opposing view can be dismissed or discounted.
- It is also important to explain **how** and **why** the evidence supports the thesis.
- Your prompt may be a huge help in highlighting specific guidelines or evidence to use, so be sure to read through the prompt clearly and thoroughly.

Evidential support (whether factual, logical, statistical, or anecdotal).

The argumentative essay requires well-researched, accurate, detailed, and current information to support the thesis statement, while also considering other points of view. Factual, logical, statistical, or anecdotal evidence should support the thesis. Often times your instructor may provide you with the primary sources to use and then ask you to include additional secondary sources from your own research. Using these sources to your advantage is key, but be mindful of **overuse**. As the writer of your essay, it is your job to do the convincing. Using too much evidence in your paper can overshadow your own analysis and argument, which will weaken your paper overall. Your evidence is meant to be a support for what you are proposing, so allow your voice to stand front and center.



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A conclusion that does not simply restate the thesis, but readdresses it in light of the evidence provided.

This is the portion of the essay that will leave the most immediate impression on the minds of your readers. Therefore, it must be effective and logical.

- **Do not introduce any new information into the conclusion;** rather, synthesize the information presented in the body of the essay.
- Restate why the topic is important, review the main points, and review your thesis.
- You may also want to include a short discussion of more research that should be completed in light of your work.

SO...important things to remember:

DO...	DO NOT...
<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Have a <u>thesis statement</u> with a <u>clear, explicit position</u> on the issue at hand.➤ Provide <u>evidence for your claims</u>, in the form of statistics, scholarly journals or reputable websites, personal stories and anecdotes, etc.➤ Explain your points clearly, using your evidence as <u>support</u> for your arguments rather using them to make your arguments for you.➤ Provide a <u>counterargument</u> (another possible perspective on your issue) and a <u>rebuttal/refutation</u> (something that points out a flaw in the counterargument or otherwise explains why your argument is favorable).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Simply say that there are pros and cons to both sides and <u>neither side is favorable</u>.➤ Make <u>personal attacks</u> against people with opposing views.➤ Provide a counterargument with <u>no rebuttal/refutation</u>.➤ Devote half of your paper to your argument and the other half to opposing views, <u>such that your paper does not favor a side</u>.➤ Organize the paper by source instead of subtopic supporting your thesis.➤ Include evidence without your own commentary

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Reference:

<https://writingcenter.unc.edu/tips-and-tools/argument/>

https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/academic_writing/essay_writing/argumentative_essays.html



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Revised, Fall 2019