



Writing an Argument

An **argumentative essay** is a type of writing that requires a writer to support a position on a topic using evidence from literature, historical examples, research or personal experience to support her viewpoint. The writer usually uses several different arguments to prove her point.

To write an argument essay, you'll need to gather evidence and present a well-reasoned argument on a debatable issue.

How Do I Choose a Debatable Issue?

- How many people could argue against my position? What would they say?
- Can it be addressed with a yes or no? (aim for a topic that requires more info.)
- Can I base my argument on scholarly evidence?
- Have I made my argument specific enough?

How Do I Create a Strong Thesis?

- Write a thesis that is focused and debatable.
- Pick a side in your thesis and make claims.
- Argue a position not a statement of fact.

Example 1: “Americans should cut back on their participation in the fast food industry because a fast food diet can lead to many health-related issues like obesity, high cholesterol, and high blood pressure.”

The example above is targeted towards a specific group instead of a general audience. By doing this, the topic is more focused and clear to your readers.



Debatable



Makes Claims





Example 2: “The homeless population in Chicago should be given access to more services like food donations, shelters, and public restrooms because it would make the environment better throughout the entire city.”

This example shows a thesis statement that is debatable. People can argue for or against this statement. Opponents could easily argue that homeless people in Berkeley already receive adequate services, or perhaps that they shouldn’t be entitled to services at all.

Example 3: “Poverty affects many Americans.”

The thesis above states an inarguable fact or observation. While the writer could find evidence and examples to support this statement, very few people would argue against this writer’s claim. To make this thesis more specific and argumentative, this writer could try to elaborate on why or how poverty affects so many Americans.

Dos and Don’ts of Writing an Argument

Do

Use passionate language.

Cite experts who agree with you.

Provide facts, evidence, and statistics to

Provide reasons to support your claim.

Address the opposing side’s argument and refute their claims.

Don’t

Don’t use weak qualifiers like “I believe,” “I feel,” or “I

Don’t claim to be an expert if you’re not one.

Don’t use strictly moral or religious claims as support

Don’t assume the audience will agree with you about

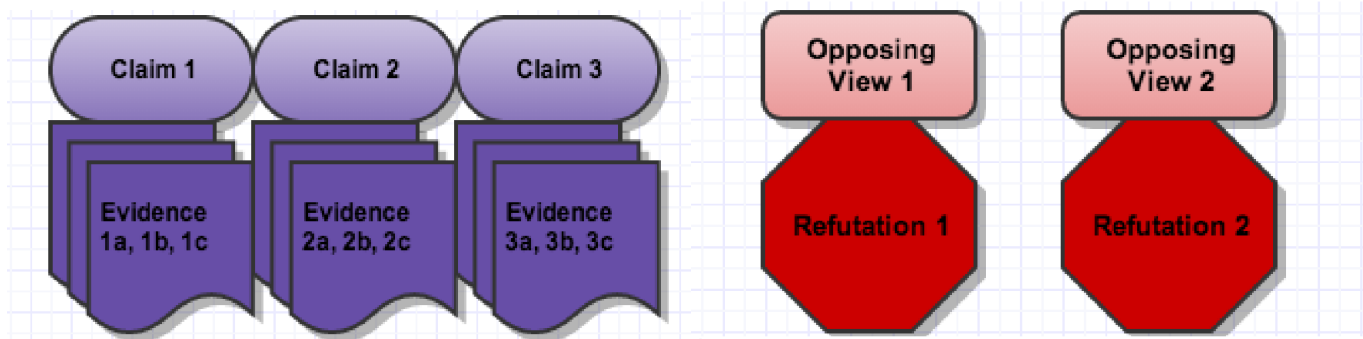
Don’t attempt to make others look bad. (i.e. Mr. Smith is ignorant—don’t listen to him!)

Evidential Support

- Evidential support can be factual, logical, statistical, or anecdotal.
- The argumentative essay requires well-researched, accurate, detailed, and current information to support the thesis statement and consider other points of view.



- A successful and well-rounded argumentative essay will discuss opinions not aligning with the thesis because the opposing ideas on the topic will be addressed.



How to Organize an Argumentative Essay

Here are several different outlines you can use to help organize your argumentative essay. These models can and should be adapted to suit the writer's needs and number of claims.

Outline I - standard format for an argumentative essay

Introduction/Thesis-Claim

Body Paragraph 1: Present your 1st point and supporting evidence.

Body Paragraph 2: Present your 2nd point and its supporting evidence.

Body Paragraph 3: Refute your opposition's first point.

Body Paragraph 4: Refute your opposition's second point.

Outline II - format that presents the opposition first as a means to demonstrate the significance of your solution (debate)

Introduction/Thesis-Claim

Body Paragraph 1: Refute your opposition's first point.

Body Paragraph 2: Refute your opposition's second point.

Body Paragraph 3: Present your first point and supporting evidence.

Body Paragraph 4: Present your second point and supporting evidence.

Conclusion/Restate Thesis



Outline III - introduce the problem and present your solution format

Introduction/Thesis-Claim

Body Paragraph 1: Present your first point and it's supporting evidence, which also refutes one of your opposition's claims.

Body Paragraph 2: Present your second point and it's supporting evidence, which also refutes a second opposition claim.

Body Paragraph 3: Present your third point and it's supporting evidence, which also refutes a third opposition claim.

Conclusion/Restate Thesis

Additional Resources

- [Approaching a Writing Assignment](#)
- [Using Evidence](#)
- [Creating an Effective Thesis](#)
- [Organizing an Essay](#)

Further Assistance: For more detailed help or if you have questions, visit the Writing Center located in the Lewis University Library or call 815-836-5427.

Sources Consulted: Purdue OWL, Kibin.com, Mesacc.edu, Roanestate.edu