

Argumentative Essay
APSU Writing Center Handout

An argumentative essay takes a clear position on an issue and defends it with reasons and evidence. Your goal is to convince readers that your position is worth considering.

The Structure of an Argumentative Essay

1. Introduction

Your introduction should:

- Introducing the issue
- Provide enough context for readers to understand the debate
- End with a clear thesis statement

Your thesis is the claim you plan to defend

2. Body Paragraphs

Each paragraph should develop one reason that supports your thesis.

A strong body paragraph usually:

- Begins with a topic sentence that states the reason
- Includes evidence (research, examples, data, expert opinion)
- Explain how that evidence supports your claim
- Connects clearly back to the thesis

3. Counterarguments

Strong arguments acknowledge that other viewpoints exist.

When addressing a counterargument:

- Present the opposing view fairly.
- Explain why some people find it convincing.
- Respond with reasoning or evidence that strengthens your own position.

4. Conclusion

Your conclusion should not simply repeat your introduction, instead, it should:

- Reaffirm your thesis in new wording
- Remind readers of your key reasons
- Explain why the issue matters

Organizing Your Arguments

Consider the order of your arguments:

- Which point is strongest?
- Do some ideas build on others?
- Does my audience need to understand one concept before accepting the next?

Using Evidence Effectively

Research strengthens your credibility. When incorporating evidence:

- Use reliable academic sources
- Introduce quotations clearly
- Analyze the evidence instead of letting it speak for itself

Introduction: Introduce your topic and end with a clear thesis statement that states your main claim.

Body Paragraph 1: Present your first reason with evidence and explain how it supports your thesis.

Body Paragraph 2: Present your second reason with evidence and explain its significance to your thesis.

Counterargument Paragraph: Acknowledge a reasonably opposing view and explain why your thesis still holds.

Conclusion: Restate your thesis in new words, summarize your main points, and explain why your argument matters.

References

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